

A HISTORY OF  
BRITISH POETRY

F. ST. JOHN CORBETT















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FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT  
OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE BEGINNING  
OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

BY

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To

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
SIR JOHN LUBBOCK, BART., D.C.L., LL.D.  
FIRST LORD AVEBURY,

MEMBER OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL;

MEMBER OF THE GERMAN ORDER OF MERIT;

COMMANDER OF THE LEGION OF HONOUR;

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY;

HON. VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY;

HON. FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE;

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES;

WHOSE CONTRIBUTIONS TO HISTORY AND GENERAL LITERATURE

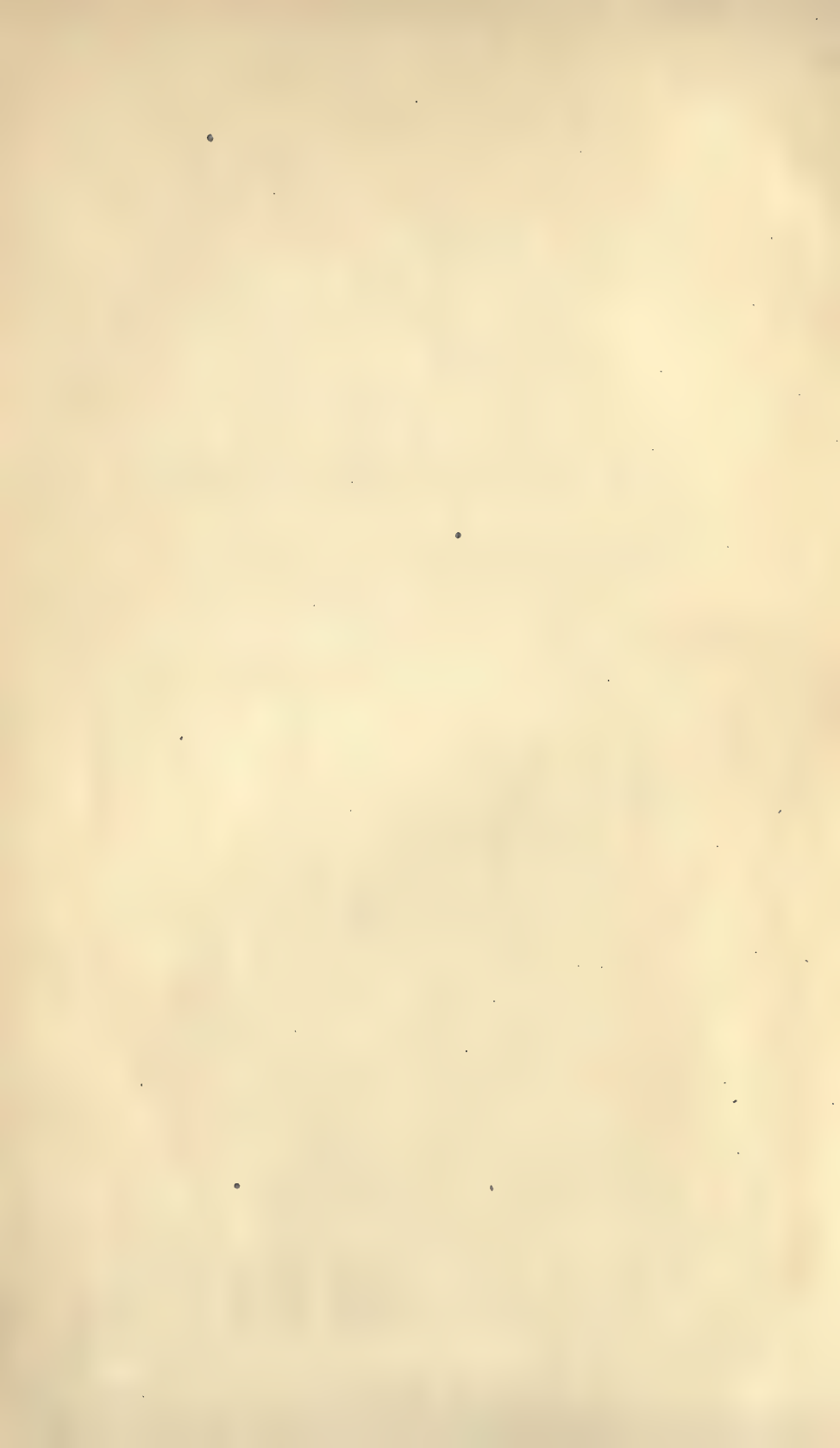
HAVE WON FOR HIM

A REPUTATION AS HONOURABLE AS IT IS WORLD-WIDE,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

BY MOST KIND PERMISSION.







## PREFACE

AN attempt has been made in the present work to trace the history of British poetry from the commencement, and to supply the student with the most important features of its development and progress to the beginning of the twentieth century. In doing so the utmost care has been taken to omit no name which is worthy of mention in a work of the kind, and to give the chief details regarding each in a due proportion.

The General Historical Sketch, though lengthy, is by no means adequate to the greatness of the subject. It is suggestive rather than comprehensive. It will be clear to the student that in its treatment it was impossible to avoid the mention of matters of fact and surmise, which are repeated, in their places, in the body of the book.

In compiling the biographical notices, the author has endeavoured to be accurate and impartial. As regards the relative space allotted to each author, the justice meted out may be open to question in some cases, but the aim has been to differentiate as far as possible between major and minor poets. In a comparative study of the works of poets of the two classes, however, it will frequently be found that the relative claims to distinction do not rest so much on the intrinsic merit of the poems as upon their length. Taken as poetry, some of the shortest works of the so-called minor poets have a greater claim to immortality, and sometimes even a greater certainty of it, than some of the epics of those whose names are as household words. It occasionally happens, too, that the biographical features are in themselves worthy of exhaustive treatment. To the earnest student of history no department of literature is more attractive and useful than biography. It conveys instruction in a form both simple



and pleasing. It improves the mind by means of example, which is so often more effective than precept. The greatest object the author hopes to achieve by means of the present volume is the incentive it should afford to the study of greater and ampler works which bear upon the same subject.

The choice of selections from the works of British Poets has been made with a view to variety in subject and treatment rather than comparative excellence. The student will remember that no poet can be justly judged, or his work fairly estimated, by means of mere extracts. Care has been taken in some cases in the present work to avoid the reproduction of pieces which are widely identified with the poets' names.

The author hereby offers his cordial thanks to all who have given him permission to quote from their writings. He hopes that, if there be any infringement of copyright, it may be forgiven as unintentional.

The author has carefully abstained from discussing matters of a controversial character, whether social, political, or religious. His aim has been to state facts with impartiality, rather than to express opinions on disputed questions.

One feature which is not always attended to with precision in histories of English literature will be apparent to the reader. The poets of English, Scottish, Irish, and Welsh nationalities are kept, where possible, apart.

For much valuable information and criticism the author is indebted to Mr. Chambers' *Cyclopædia of English Literature*, Warton's *History of English Poetry*, Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, and the works of Mr. Spalding, Dr. Collier, Dr. Craik, Professor Dowden, Dr. P. W. Joyce, and Mr. Stopford Brooke. The Rev. Robert Williams' *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen* has been of service in the selection of poets of Welsh nationality.

The author wishes to record his grateful acknowledgments to Dr. John Corbett, M.A., LL.D., Member of the Senate of the University of Dublin, for his kindness in correcting the proof-sheets of this work.

F. ST. JOHN CORBETT.

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# A GENERAL HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF BRITISH POETRY

THE earliest specimens of poetry found in the British Islands belong to the fifth century. They consist of some fragments of Irish verse, contained in the *Annals*. Every kind of learning was held in high esteem by the ancient Irish people, and most of their lore was written in books. Dr. P. W. Joyce, in one of his excellent histories of Ireland, tells us that ‘after the time of St. Patrick everything that was considered worthy of being preserved was committed to writing, so that manuscripts gradually accumulated all through the country. But in the dark time of the Danish ravages, and during the troubled centuries that followed the Anglo-Norman invasion, the manuscript collections were gradually dispersed, and a large portion lost or destroyed.’

A considerable number of manuscripts, however, are still extant, the two most important collections being those in the libraries of Trinity College, Dublin, and the Royal Irish Academy. These collections contain a large number of manuscripts ranging in date from the sixth century to the present day. The largest of the manuscript books is the *Book of Leinster*, though it is not the most ancient. It is written on vellum, and contains four hundred and ten pages, on which are inscribed about one thousand pieces relating to Ireland, some of which are written in verse. The *Psalter of Cashel*, said to be the most ancient existing manuscript of Irish literature, is a collection of metrical legends written by a man who combined in his own person the two offices of King of Munster and Bishop of Cashel. A portion of the book is now



to be seen in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. It was compiled towards the end of the ninth century.

In those early days the poets played no small part in the education and amusement of the people. Few of the general public were able to read, and consequently they were in a great measure dependent on professional poets and story-tellers, who recited their pieces from memory. 'At every festive gathering,' says Dr. Joyce, 'among the lowest as well as the highest, one of these story-tellers was sure to be present, who was now and then called upon to repeat a tale or a poem for the amusement of the company. And as soon as he stood up, these rough men ceased their noisy revels, and listened with deep delight to some tale of the heroes of old. A harper was also present, who charmed the company with his delightful Irish airs; or if it was a gathering of the lower classes, more likely a piper.'

Dr. Craik has pointed out that as the forms of the original English alphabetical characters are the same as those of the Irish, it is probable that it was from Ireland the English first derived their knowledge of letters. Certain it seems to be that for some ages Ireland was the chief seat of learning in Christian Europe; and the most distinguished scholars who appeared in other countries were, as a rule, either Irish by birth or had received their education in Irish schools. Further, we are informed by the Venerable Bede that in his day, the earlier part of the eighth century, it was customary for his English fellow-countrymen of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, to retire for study and devotion to Ireland, where, he adds, they were all hospitably received, and supplied gratuitously with food, with books, and with instruction.

Welsh poetry stands next to Irish in the matter of antiquity. In Wales also the profession of the bard was held in high esteem. The poems of Taliesin, the Merddins, and other poets of the sixth century are still in existence. The *Triads*, some of which are attributed to Welsh writers of the thirteenth century, are sets of historical events and moral proverbs, arranged in groups of three. Both in these, and in the ballads of the bards, one of the chief heroes is the great King Arthur, whose prowess against the Saxons was so noted in those far-off days.

It must not be supposed that either the Irish or the Welsh poets of those early days either wrote or recited in anything even



remotely resembling the language which we now call English. The Irish wrote in Gaelic, and the Welsh in Cymric, each of these being a section of the Celtic language, which was that of the earliest inhabitants of the British Islands. The first Irishman who wrote verses in English was Michael of Kildare, who flourished in the latter part of the thirteenth century, and is supposed to have been the author of the much-quoted satirical poem entitled *The Land of Cockayne*.

Next in chronological order stand the earliest fragments of English verse; of which there exist written remains dating from the seventh century at least, the English language having been known by that name since the fifth century.

The few existing specimens of the Scottish Gaelic bear a much later date than the ancient Irish ballads. The celebrated James Macpherson published what purported to be the poems of Ossian as translations from Gaelic manuscripts as old as the fourth century. These are now known to the world as merely clever literary forgeries. A narrative poem, called the *Albanic Duan*, is assigned to the eleventh century. The earliest fragment of Scottish poetry is given, though without a date, by Mr. Chambers. The fragment has been preserved by Wyntoun. It runs as follows :

Quhen Alysander oure kyng was dede  
That Scotland led in luwe and le (love and law),  
Away wes sons of ale and brede (always was plenty),  
Of wyne and wax, of gamyn and gle ;  
Oure golde wes changyd into lede,  
Cryst borne into virgynyte,  
Succor Scotland and remede,  
That stad is in perplexyte (standing).

King Alexander died on the 16th of March, 1286.

Mr. Sharon Turner, the historian of the Anglo-Saxons, has calculated that, if the English language were divided into a hundred parts, sixty would be Saxon, and Archbishop Trenchard agrees with this estimate, which is said to be verified by the vocabulary of our English Bible, as well as by the plays of Shakespeare. But on the other hand, as is pointed out by Mr. Chambers, Professor Max Müller states that the Norman elements in English have a decided preponderance. The Professor cites M. Thomerel, who counted every word in our dictionaries, and established the fact that the number of Teutonic or Saxon words in English amounts to 13,230, whereas there are 29,853 traceable to



a Latin source. It has been pointed out that this disparity arises from the philologist looking at the words apart from the stem or grammar of the language. The great influx of Neo-Latin and other vocables in the course of the nation's progress is undoubted, but, as Professor Max Müller admits, in a scientific classification the English must be ranked as Saxon. The change from Anglo-Saxon into English may be briefly said to embrace, in successive stages, Anglo-Saxon, Semi-Saxon, Old or Early English, Middle English, and Modern English, or the language which is now spoken.

The language which the Angles and Saxons introduced into this country when they came over from the Continent and took possession of the greater part of South Britain, in the fifth and sixth centuries, may fairly be said to have formed the foundation of the English language of the present day. There were at least two respects in which it differed from modern English. It was in the first place an unmixed language, and in the second it was a synthetic rather than an analytic language. Thus the grammar and construction of our national speech are derived from our Northern invaders, and now, after fourteen centuries, their language, enriched from various and distant sources, has become the speech of fifty millions of people, to be found in all quarters of the globe. The country took its name of England from a leading branch of the invaders, called Angles, while the new language was called Anglo-Saxon.

This language was a branch of the Teutonic. The Teutons were a people who occupied a considerable portion of central Europe at the same time that the West was overpowered by the Celts. The Anglo-Saxon language continued with but slight change to be the language of England until the eleventh century. During the five centuries which preceded the eleventh it received additions from the Latin, which was introduced by Christian missionaries, and from the Danish, which was a kindred dialect of the Teutonic. The latter additions were made by the vast numbers of Danes who came over from Denmark and endeavoured to effect settlements in England. Thus, to quote the words of Mr. Stopford Brooke, 'the language written in the year 700 is the same as that in which the prose of the Bible is written, just as much as the tree planted a hundred years ago is the same tree to-day. It is this sameness of language, as well as the sameness



of national spirit, which makes our literature one literature for 1,200 years.'

The earliest compositions that appear in the Anglo-Saxon tongue are poetical in form. They are almost always impassioned in tone, and usually combine the elements of instruction with 'that exercise of the imagination which has been in every age one of the chief characteristics of poetry.' Yet the portions preserved are but scanty, and the poetry, which is fairly described by historians as 'inferior to the Northern in depth of feeling,' is rude in structure, and frequently deficient in imagery and fancy. In many cases, moreover, the dates and authorship are either decidedly doubtful or altogether unknown. The versification is abrupt, and the rules uncertain.

It can be stated with positive certainty, however, that in its earliest stages poetry was entirely dependent for its character on *alliteration* and *accentuation*. Anglo-Saxon poetry, like Icelandic, is entirely alliterative. It was not until after the Norman Conquest that alliteration gave place to rhyme. This form of ornate writing consists in the recurrence of words or syllables beginning with the same letter, as in the well-known line :

By apt alliteration's artful aid.

Its artful aid is now but rarely used by poets, though it is by no means obsolete, and, if not overdone, adds to the sweetness and harmony of numbers. The change from alliteration to rhyme was no doubt largely the result of the influence of the French versification, which has always been based on rhyme. The old alliterative method maintained its ground amongst the masses of the people, and can boast the earliest great work of imagination in our poetical literature, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, which is the first of 'the three great allegorical works which have successively gained the ear of the English people.' After that date—the latter half of the fourteenth century—alliteration ceased to be observed as a fixed rule of poetry.

The Anglo-Saxon gleemen, or minstrels, were very important personages. To them we are indebted for the 'oral transmission' upon which the perpetuation of poetical pieces depended before the age of manuscripts or books. The following description is given by Wright of the verse in which the gleemen, or minstrels, sang :

'The poetry of the Anglo-Saxons was neither modulated ac-



cording to foot-measure, like that of the Greeks and Romans, nor written with rhymes, like that of many modern languages. Its chief and universal characteristic was a very regular alliteration, so arranged that in every couplet there should be two principal words in the first line beginning with the same letter, which letter must also be the initial of the first word, on which the stress of the voice falls in the second line. . The only approach to a metrical system yet discovered is that two risings and two fallings of the voice seem necessary to each perfect line. Two distinct measures are met with, a shorter and a longer, both commonly mixed together in the same poem ; the former being used for the ordinary narrative, and the latter adopted when the poet sought after greater dignity. In the manuscript the Saxon poetry is always written continuously, like prose ; but the division of the lines is always marked by a point.'

Rhyme was spoken of contemptuously by Milton, who referred to it as ' the jingling sound of like endings,' a statement which would suggest the thought that it did not meet with popular favour for some considerable time after its introduction into English poetry.

As an example of the earliest form, dependent on alliteration and accent, we may give the following couplet from a war-song—

Wigu wintrum geong  
Wordum mælde,<sup>1</sup>

which may be translated :

Warrior of winters young  
With words spake.

The accentuation of the words depended upon the thought. In these earliest poems more attention is paid to the matter than to the manner. Unrhymed and alliterative verse lasted until the reign of John. It was revived in the days of Edward III. and Richard II. The blending of alliteration with rhyme continued until the sixteenth century.

The poetical works of the Anglo-Saxons are not the most attractive of their literary relics. They have been pronounced ' lacking in the pathos which inspires the bardic songs of the vanquished Cymrians, the exulting imagination which reigns in the Sagas of the North, and the dramatic life which animates, everywhere, the legendary tales that light up the dim beginnings of a nation's history.' But it has also been admitted that the

<sup>1</sup> Professor Stopford Brooke's *English Literature Primer*.



literature which thus neither excites by images of barbarism nor soothes by the refinements of art possesses claims of its own to admiration and respect in the loftiness and far-sightedness of its aims, its moral and religious purity, and the evident desire to improve the character of their countrymen which animated its authors, who, as a rule, were the best-instructed men of their times.

The earliest specimen of an English or Anglo-Saxon poem is called *The Song of the Traveller*.<sup>1</sup> It is said to have been written in the fifth century by a man who had lived in the fourth. But the poem is little more than a list of names of the places to which the minstrel went with the Goths. With it may be classed the *Battle of Finnesburg*, *Deor's Complaint*, the *Lay of Beowulf*, and two fragments of an epic entitled *Waldhere*. Of these *Beowulf* is the largest and most interesting. It contains more than six thousand lines, and is thought to be much older than the manuscript of it which survives. It is a Norse saga, and illustrates, in a highly romantic and picturesque manner, some of the early Gothic customs and superstitions. The use of metaphors is common in the poem, but it contains only five similes—a lack of the latter being a characteristic of Anglo-Saxon poetry. This poem, which takes rank amongst English poetical works as the oldest epic, is indeed the oldest poem of an epic form in Europe. It is thought that it was written in the fifth century. It was edited, in the form in which we now have it, in the eighth century. Mention may also be made here of the fragment of *Judith*, the date and authorship of which are unknown, but as it was found in the same manuscript as *Beowulf*, it is just possible that it may have been composed at the same time.

All the above-mentioned poems were written on the Continent before the emigrations to England. The first English poem actually written on English soil is a paraphrase of the Scriptures, the author of which was Cædmon, originally a cowherd and afterwards a monk at Whitby in Northumbria. The story of his 'call' to the work of a poet is given in the sketch of his life, and is intensely interesting. It is believed that he died in 680 or thereabouts, and that the *Paraphrase* was completed about ten years earlier. It has been stated by some historians that there were two poets of this name, the elder of whom

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes called *The Gleeman's Song*.



composed some lines on the Creation which are acknowledged to be amongst the oldest existing specimens of Anglo-Saxon, the younger being the author of the *Paraphrase*.

Of the merits or demerits of a composition such as Cædmon's, viewing it as an example of English poetry, it is not possible for the modern critic or historian to say much. It is valuable to the student of English literature as an example of the diction of its age, but for all practical purposes of criticism it defies censure as surely as it fails to elicit praise or admiration. It is due, perhaps, to what has been aptly termed our own inevitable ignorance of the earlier methods that we do not look with hope for much evidence of culture or literary grace amongst the poems of the Anglo-Saxons. But when we consider the circumstances under which they lived, we cannot but be surprised at the number and magnitude of the literary relics which they have bequeathed to us.

Amongst the writers of Anglo-Latin poetry may be mentioned Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborn, who flourished in the latter half of the seventh century. He was the most distinguished pupil of Adrian, and the founder of the abbey at Malmesbury. He translated the Book of Psalms, and wrote a treatise in hexameters—*De Laude Virginitatis*—as well as a poem on the *Seven Cardinal Virtues*. The Venerable Bede also wrote in Latin. He is more celebrated for prose than for poetry, his metrical compositions being 'correct but lifeless.' Alcuin, another great writer of prose, was also prolific in Latin verse, and is chiefly celebrated for his *Elegy* on the destruction of Lindisfarne by the Danes. In the tenth century the list was added to by Fridegode's *Life of St. Wilfrid* and Wolstan's *Life of St. Swithun*. Latin verses were also written by Cuthbert, Boniface, and Columban.

Our literary history, after the death of Bede (or Bæda), cannot be said to contain any great names until it brings before us that of the amiable and learned Alfred the Great, whose love of verse, coupled with the capacity which he evinced for remembering the songs of the gleemen, would alone entitle him to honourable mention in a history of English poetry. His chief claim to be remembered, however, lies in the fact that he was the Father of English prose.

After the death of Cædmon, our poetry, though partly secular,



was in the main religious in tone. The spread of the monasteries would account in a large measure for this. What is left of the poetry of this period is now to be found in the *Vercelli Book* and the *Exeter Book*, so called from the places in which the manuscripts are now kept. In these are to be found some poems by Cynewulf, the most notable of the Northern poets of the time. He was, it appears, a minstrel at the Court of one of the Northumbrian kings, and was exiled in the eighth century. In these valuable repertories are also to be found metrical translations of the Psalms, hymns and prayers in verse, and Didactic and Gnostic poems. 'One fine fragment in which Death speaks to man, and describes the low and hateful and doorless house of which he keeps the key, does not belong to these books, and with the few English verses Bæda made when he was dying, tells us how stern was the thought of our fathers about the grave. But, stern as these fragments are, the Old English religious poetry always passes on to speak of a brighter world. Thus we are told, in the Ode in the *Saxon Chronicle*, that King Eadgar "left this weak life, and chose for himself another light, sweet and fair." ' War poems, such as the *Song of Brunanburgh*, written in 938, and the *Song of the Fight of Maldon*, written in 998, afford us examples of a class of poetry which was also much in vogue at this time.

*Athelstan's Song of Victory*, the date of which is about 938, is contained in the *Saxon Chronicle*.

Mention may be made here of the *Song of Canute*, composed as he was rowing one day on the river which flows past the minster of Ely. The reverend monks were chanting a hymn as the King passed by, whereupon His Majesty composed the song which we have given in the text, and which obtained great popularity, it may be, on account of its author as much as for its intrinsic merit.

In the year 1066 Saxon England was invaded and conquered by William, Duke of Normandy. This event produced considerable changes in the learning and literature of the nation. A period of decay may be said to have then set in, though its germs had existed from the commencement, and out of this decay grew and developed the English language which we speak to-day. Saxon scholarship, indeed, had been on the decline since the death of Alfred the Great. Even the bishops of the time made



a poor show as men of letters, and the Conqueror deposed some of them in order to make room for Continental scholars. Such learning as there was had become the monopoly of ecclesiastics, whose professional language was Latin. As a natural outcome of this, we find a large number of works written in that language during the centuries following the Conquest.

At this point our attention must turn to that vigorous and imaginative school of poetry which arose in the Norman-French tongue, and was the model of the earliest efforts in our own. The Norman Romance rose and fell with Chivalry.

A group of dialects sprung out of decayed Latin, of which two stand out as leading ones. In these some Teutonic additions from the Franks formed another ingredient. The two dialects were called the *Langue d'Oc* and the *Langue d'Oil*. The former was in vogue in the South, and the latter in the North of France. The *Langue d'Oc* was nearer akin to Italian and Spanish than to modern French. The poets who wrote in it were called *Troubadours*, or Inventors. It had but a small effect on the poetry of our country, though it became the favourite model of the early poets of Italy. It 'blazed out a brief day of glory, and was trampled down with all its lovely garlands of song by Montford and his crusaders; and now exists only as the rude *patois* of the province that bears its name.'

The *Langue d'Oil* has developed into modern French, and was originally that which we speak of as Norman-French. It was brought to perfection in Normandy, where it was first used in the composition of important literary works. The influence which it wrought upon our literature was considerable. Its poets were known as *Trouvères*, and the style which they favoured was the narrative or short story. They also indulged in chivalrous romances, which were as a rule longer and more serious than the narrative poems. 'The lays sung by the *Trouvères* of Northern France in praise of knights and knighthood,' says Dr. Collier, 'were the delight of the Norman soldiers who fought at Hastings; and when those soldiers had settled as conquerors on the English soil, what was more natural than that they should still love the old Norman lays, and that a new generation of poets should learn in the Normanized island to sing in Norman too?'

Then followed what has been aptly termed 'a confusion of



tongues.' The men of learning still cultivated Latin as an elegant accomplishment. Under the influence of the minstrels 'a more natural, though irregular,' school of poetry was formed, 'the application of whose accentual system of verse to Latin, in defiance of quantity, gave rise to the *Leonine* verse, which was used for epigrams, for satires, and also for the hymns of the Church.' *Leonine* verse was naturalized in Europe by the end of the eleventh century. The name is ascribed to verses rhymed as well as accentual. Again, to the earlier part of the reign of Edward II. belongs the frivolous *Macaronic* poetry, which is notable for its mixture of different languages. The following verse contains a medley of Latin, French, and English :

Quant homme deit parler, videat quæ verba loquatur,  
 Seu covent aver, ne stultior inveneatur.  
 Quando quis loquitur, bote resoun reste theynne,  
 Derisum patitur, and lutel so shall he wyne.

It is not to be wondered at that this confusion of tongues led to the corruption of them all, and consequently none of them were spoken as correctly as when they were kept apart.

We have very few English metrical remains, besides the *Chronicles* and romances, from the period between the Conquest and the middle of the twelfth century. The few we do possess, moreover, are not of very great value, though they possess not a little real interest as antiquities, and sometimes as historical records.

The Old English period of our literary history began with the reign of Henry III. A proclamation of this monarch, issued in 1258, is looked upon by some authorities as the first monument of Old English. The *Surtees Psalter* may be looked upon as marking the boundary line. Its issue dates from 1250.

The chief feature of the latter half of the thirteenth and of the first half of the fourteenth centuries is the popularity enjoyed by the metrical *Romance*. *Sir Tristrem*, *Havelock*, and *King Horn* were written before 1300. We possess 'more than a score' of those written during the fourteenth century. 'It is impossible,' says Mr. Chambers, 'to discuss them all at length. They defy epitome, and are not easily represented by extracts, nor is a general criticism likely to be very profitable.' The great majority of them are translations from the French. Three of them have English heroes—*Richard Cœur de Lion*, *Bevis of Southampton*, and *Guy of Warwick*.



With the poetry of the immediate predecessors of Chaucer we have dealt in the text. The chief were Minot, Langland, and Gower.

It is almost trite to say that the real history of English literature begins with Chaucer. Just as Dante was the representative of the best that could be found in the religion and politics of Italy, so is Chaucer the embodiment of all that was excellent in the intellectual life of his own country. He it was who by his writings 'rescued the English language from the hotch-potch of Saxon *patois*, Norman-French, and monk Latin' into which it had degenerated, and 'wove it into a living and harmonious whole, whilst in his fidelity to life and in the breath of his human sympathy he gave that tone to English literature which is the noblest feature of its glory in the past, and the greatest guarantee of the permanence of its influence in the future.'

It has been pointed out by many writers that any great mental outburst is the result of pent-up political feeling. Just as this may be traced in the imposing array of Greek writers who grew out of the removal of 'the overshadowing malific influence of the Persian power,' so is it also traceable in the writings of Alfred the Great and the scholarly men with whom he was surrounded on the subjugation of the Danes, and in the Chaucerian period by the desire to escape from Latin as a language and a ruling power.

'The Greek language, civilization, and refinement had been obliterated by Roman rule; Roman civilization and refinement by the sluggish ignorance and sensuality of the monastic orders in the dark ages. At last, under the reaction from great military pressure, Alfred reduced to order the phonetic colloquial language of his people. With no books but those of the ecclesiastics, no dictionaries (though it is stated that Bishop Asser wrote a glossary for his Boëthius), and with no official scribes, as the Greeks had, he produced by his critical translations, not only a new *written* language, but one containing historical matter of the deepest interest, including all that was then known of the geography of the world. But the language was hard, the characters far from easy, and the students few.' So writes Dr. Phené in a powerful essay on the influence of Chaucer on the language and literature of England.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature.*



He goes on to show that this was the heterogeneous state of mental culture which Chaucer had to contend with when the Anglo-Saxon tongue had to be 'Englished.' The national mind being destitute of any literary knowledge beyond what may be termed the ecclesiastical, 'he took up the most popular feature in which that knowledge found its external expression, and produced a dramatic and picturesque effect through his pilgrims (pilgrimage being then the grand feature of the age), tending to instruction, moral bearing, and lasting mental pictures of entertainment, incorporating the medieval play-loving feature with a lofty purpose, and through an attractive medium. His sagacity did not stop at this. It can hardly be supposed that, any more than Homer, he had a preceptor, nor an example to go by; but, led into a channel which resulted in great good to the prosperity of his country, he put all this graphic matter into *verse*. Prose is a long, laborious, and heavy process, suited only to a thoroughly understood language and subject. Poetry, from its shorter sentences, apt allusions, pungent satire, vivacity, and general powers, possesses a grasp which secures the memory in the most enticing form, and when brilliant, joyous, and descriptively picturesque, enables the unlearned to take hold with delight on a subject, and produces an unforgettable enjoyment. But beyond this, its power over words, its grammatical constructions and variations, its musical cadence, metre, and rhythm, render it, whether the Homeric or Chaucerian poems are in question, a means of framing a language, grammaticizing, and conveying instruction, particularly that of history, which no other medium possesses. As the Homeric poems formed the basis of the Greek language, so the Chaucerian are the substratum of the English; and if, as was the case, no language in ancient times equalled the Greek, so certainly in modern times no language equals the English.'

The rhyming chronicles and the Norman metrical romances were the only models which Chaucer had in his own language, but he had the benefit of the great Italian models, and in his earlier works may be traced some proofs of the tendency of infant literature to translation. He had also the advantages of the extended knowledge which the intercourse of nations, the results of the Crusades, and the wars of Edward III. had communicated to Western Europe. Nevertheless, though the



abundance of his knowledge, the novelty of his ideas and images, and the beauty and cadence of his verse cannot have failed to create a deep impression on the literary aspirants of his age, his coming was not followed by any immediate improvement in English poetry in general. Well has Warton compared his advent to that of 'a genial day in spring,' whose promise of coming sunshine is too often succeeded by a return of cheerless weather, a cheerlessness which is all the more felt in this case through contrast with the brilliant sunlight shed abroad by one whom Hallam has classed with Dante and Petrarca in the great triumvirate of the Middle Ages.

Campbell points to the stern repression of novelty by the Lollards as a cause of blight in the poetic blossom. John de Wycliffe had already lighted the torch of the Reformation, which was not without a powerful influence on the evolution of our literature, and Chaucer was one of those who favoured the movement.

Of Chaucer's contemporaries Gower is undoubtedly the most literary. His verse is polished and fluent, though somewhat archaic in form. Though possessed of unquestionable powers of dramatic description, he is curbed by rigid restraints, and never indulges in 'that luxury—the greatest of all to a true poetic mind—the luxury of unbridled sentiment.'

The fourteenth century is the most important in the intellectual history of European nations. It is the period of transition from the ages of Chivalry and Feudalism to the Revival of Letters and the Reformation. Chivalry, indeed, as a political institution at least, was slowly but surely breathing its last. The English character was rapidly assuming that insularity which followed close upon the victories of Crécy and Poitiers. The vernacular language was beginning to take its proper place in the nation's literature, and the dawn of modern 'English' began to show more clearly.

Many Chivalrous Romances were now added to the increasing store-house of English literature. Though Chaucer indulged in some good-natured and good-humoured satire at their expense, it must be acknowledged that they evinced no small amount of intrinsic merit, and even Chaucer himself was in some measure affected by them, both as to spirit and diction.

One of the greatest of Chaucer's contemporaries was the



author of *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, which was completed in 1362. The language of this strange composition wears an air of antiquity beyond its actual age. It led to many imitations, the best of which was entitled *Piers Plowman's Creed*, of which the author was a Wycliffite. From the death of Chaucer in 1400, nearly two hundred years elapsed without producing any poet who could be compared to him, though those two centuries were more enlightened than the time in which the Father of English poetry lived and wrote.

The progress of learning and of taste in Scotland was marked by the foundation of the Universities of St. Andrews and Glasgow, the former by Bishop Wardlaw in 1411, and the latter by Bishop Turnbull in 1450. And even for England a better day was fast approaching. The feudal age was passing rapidly away. The expedition of Charles VIII. of France into Italy was undertaken in 1494, and this enterprise is looked upon by Hallam as the turning-point of subsequent events, and the mark of the commencement of modern history. 'All things wore the appearance of the approach of a period of extensive progress and improvement among civilized mankind; but the vestiges of rudeness still clung around the age, and the poetry of England had yet received no watering.'

The fifteenth century is the era of the beginning of what is technically known in history as the Renaissance, or the Revival of Arts and Letters in Europe. The multiplication of printed books, and more especially of the Latin and Greek classics, tended greatly to increase the learning of Europe, and introduced new words into the English language which the poets were not slow to make use of. Literature in general began to improve, and a century after the death of Chaucer the better day began to make its presence felt. Speaking of the influence of the Italian Revival, Mr. Stopford Brooke says: 'Such an interest was made and deepened by the revival of letters which arose after 1453 in Italy, and we have seen that before the last two decades of the fifteenth century many Englishmen had gone to Italy to read and study the old Greek authors on whom the scholars driven from Constantinople by the Turks were lecturing in the schools of Florence. The New Learning increased in England, and passed on into the sixteenth century, until it decayed for a time in the violence of the religious struggle.'



But we had now begun to do our own work as translators of the classics, and the young English scholars whom the Italian revival had awakened filled year after year the land with English versions of the ancient writers of Rome and Greece. It is in this growing influence of the great classic models of literature that we find the gathering together of another of the sources of that great Elizabethan literature which seems to arise so suddenly, but which had, in reality, been long preparing.' It has been justly remarked that while Scotland, notwithstanding the troubles which marked the reigns of the Jameses, was redeeming the poetical character of the fifteenth century from the discredit thrown on it by the comparative feebleness of the art in England, her living tongue was, until very near the end of this period, used in versified compositions only. Scottish prose does not appear, in any literary shape, till the beginning of the sixteenth century, and its earliest efforts were merely translations.

The poetry of Scotland was strongly marked by certain Celtic elements which have been classified by Mr. Stopford Brooke. They may be briefly stated as containing (1) the love of wild nature for its own sake, (2) the love of colour, and (3) a certain mode of witty and coarse humour. 'Few things are really more different than the humour of Chaucer and the humour of Dunbar, than the humour of Cowper and the humour of Burns.'

The national elements in Scottish verse are equally strong. The nation was oppressed, and felt the need of self-assertion. For nearly forty years they were engaged in self-defence against the efforts of England to subjugate them. Such circumstances could not fail to result in a strong assertion of national independence. The love of country is further evinced in the true descriptions of local scenery which elevate and beautify the verses of Scottish bards. Chaucer, Shakespeare, and even Milton indulge in descriptive scenes which are not completely English, but 'in Scotland it is always the scenery of their own land that the poets describe. Even when they are imitating Chaucer they do not imitate his conventional landscape. They put in a Scotch landscape.'

The art of printing had been known and practised in Germany for nearly thirty years before it was introduced into England



by William Caxton, in the year 1474. The first printing-press whose types were inked on English soil was set up in the Almonry of Westminster, where the monks used to distribute alms to the poor. 'As we write the name of Caxton,' says Dr. Collier, 'a grave and beardless face, with an expression somewhat akin to sadness, rises from the past, looking calmly out from the descending lappets of the hood, which was the fashionable headdress of his day. All honour to the memory of the Father of the English Press!' A wondrous revolution now took place. For twenty years or thereabouts Caxton practised the new art with vigour and success. Work after work was issued from the press, until, in spite of the cumbersome nature of the undeveloped machinery, he had himself caused the publication of about sixty-five volumes. The third stage in the evolution of literary history was thus entered upon, when the manuscript gave place to the printed book, even as oral transmission had been superseded by the use of the pen. The art was not introduced into Scotland until the beginning of the sixteenth century, the oldest of the extant books, a collection of ballads and metrical romances, bearing the date of 1508. On the death of Caxton, Wynkin de Worde, one of his assistants, continued the good work, and to his press are assigned four hundred and eight works. Thus did the new art begin to grow.

Of those who wrote in the mother-tongue in the fifteenth century the most numerous were the poets, 'by courtesy so called.' Few of them, however, established any claim to special remembrance. Indeed, they are now referred to as 'a crowd of worthless and forgotten versifiers that fill up the annals of our national minstrelsy from Chaucer to Lord Surrey.' Ritson, in his *Bibliographia Poetica*, gives the names of seventy who were more or less recognised as poets at this time. But the first name of any note after Chaucer is that of Thomas Occleve, who flourished about the year 1420. Most of his poems remain in manuscript, though Ritson tells us that 'six of peculiar stupidity' were selected and published by Dr. Askew in 1796. There is no doubt that Occleve was personally acquainted with Chaucer, to whom he constantly refers as his 'master and poetic father.' But Dr. Craik affirms that he seems to have gained no more from his admirable model than 'some initiation in that smoothness and regularity of diction of which Chaucer's



writings set the first great example,' and Warton tells us that the very titles of his pieces indicate the poverty and frigidity of his genius.

Of a different class were the writings of John Lydgate, the monk of Bury, who must be accounted the most famous versifier of his age. A selection from his minor poems was edited by Mr. Halliwell, and printed for the Percy Society in 1840. 'His muse,' says Warton, in his *History of English Poetry*, 'was of universal access; and he was not only the poet of the monastery, but of the world in general. If a disguising was intended by the company of goldsmiths, a mask before His Majesty at Eltham, a May-game for the sheriffs and aldermen of London, a mumming before the Lord Mayor, a procession of pageants from the Creation for the festival of *Corpus Christi*, or a carol for the Coronation, Lydgate was consulted and gave the poetry.'

The reigns of Edward IV., Richard III., and Henry VII., embracing the period from 1461 to 1509, were destitute of true poetry, though there was no lack of minor poets. It is worthy of note that at this time the most remarkable contributions to our poetical literature were afforded by a race of Scottish poets, such as Henryson, Dunbar, Douglas, King James I. of Scotland, Wynton, Holland, and Henry the Minstrel, commonly called Blind Harry.

The poetical literature of England during the first half of the sixteenth century may be said to mark the dawn of a new day. Amongst the poets who belong to the reign of Henry VII. the most remarkable is Stephen Hawes, whose best-remembered work is entitled *The Pastime of Pleasure, or History of Grand Amour and La Belle Pucelle*. This poem is described by Warton as the only effort of imagination and invention which had appeared since the time of Chaucer. That critic also praises it for its touches of romance and allegory. Lydgate's writings supplied Hawes with a model, and it is allowed by Dr. Craik that 'Lydgate and Hawes may stand together as perhaps the two writers who in the century and a half that followed the death of Chaucer, contributed most to carry forward the regulation and modernization of the language which he began.' The transition from *Middle English* to *Modern English* was gradually taking place, and was now, indeed, nearly accom-



plished. The youth, or adolescence, of our existing speech had lasted from the middle of the fourteenth century, and the middle of the sixteenth was to see the dawn of its manhood.

The poetry of John Skelton must also be noted as amongst the best which was produced in this reign and the earlier part of that of Henry VIII. A brilliant and dauntless satirist; he bequeathed his name to the style in which he wrote. This writer 'graduated as poet laureate (a degree in grammar, including versification and rhetoric) at Oxford before 1490,' and was tutor to the young prince who became Henry VIII. He was called by Erasmus *Britannicarum literarum decus et lumen*—the Light and Ornament of English Letters. Yet it must not be supposed that the best in this age was good. Though the Latin verses of Skelton are distinguished by their excellence, his English poems are not remarkable for any greater merit than facility of expression and unfailing vivacity. Alexander Barclay was the author of one of the most celebrated of the classical translations with which the literature of the sixteenth century abounds. The work is called *The Ship of Fools*, and is from the German of Sebastian Brandt. It is valuable as an index to the English manners and customs of the day, though the versification is poor. John Heywood, called the Epigrammatist, was also of this date.

A new poetical literature, rightly described as a revival of the higher poetry, came into being when the Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt began to write. They may be said to divide the honours of the first half of the sixteenth century. The former was the first writer of our present form of English blank verse, 'the suggestion of which he probably took from the earliest Italian example of that form of poetry, a translation of the First and Fourth Books of the *Æneid* by the Cardinal Hippolito de' Medici (or, as some say, by Francesco Maria Molza), which was published at Venice in 1541.' In a collection of Surrey's poems, published in 1557, there is a translation of these two books. This is, however, only the first instance of a new form of blank verse, another form of the same kind of poetry being found in the Ormulum. To Surrey belongs yet another distinction, inasmuch as he is regarded as the first English classical poet.

Sir Thomas Wyatt, although his style is inferior to that of Surrey, is distinguished in history as the author of the first



Sonnet written in the English language. It is a translation of a Sonnet of Petrarca. He wrote about thirty in all, only one of which is not in the 'legitimate,' or Petrarchan form. Mr. Stone, in his valuable 'Introduction' to his collection of *Sonnets of the Sacred Year*, gives us a history and explanation of this form of poetry which will repay the student who peruses it carefully. The Sonnet is the most ancient form of Italian poetry, and was practised in that country as early as the thirteenth century. Petrarch, who died in 1374, made it his model and brought it to perfection. The Petrarchan form, which was used also by Tasso and all the other Italian sonneteers, is now called the 'proper' or 'legitimate,' in contradistinction to the greater ease and freedom characteristic of the larger number of English Sonnets. It may be useful to note, in passing, that an easily accessible example of the proper method of disposing the fourteen deca-syllabic lines which must be used in a poem of this class will be found in the sonnet *On Westminster Bridge* by Wordsworth. The *Songs and Sonnettes* of Surrey and Wyatt were first published, by Tottel, in 1557, in his *Miscellany*, which was the first poetical collection printed in the English language.

The Ballad, which may be defined as 'a simple narrative poem in short stanzas of two or four lines, in which a story is told in straightforward verse, often with great elaborateness and detail in incident, but always with graphic simplicity and force,' was produced in great abundance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is, in short, a sort of minor epic. The earlier examples were composed by wandering minstrels, and were orally transmitted. Many of them are lost for ever. For the best collection of them we are indebted to Bishop Percy, who published a large number of them in his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* in 1765. This form of verse, almost without exception, affects 'the iambic measure of twelve or fourteen syllables, rhyming in couplets, which, however, naturally divide themselves by means of the *cæsura*, or pause, into stanzas of four lines, the rhymes generally occurring at the end of the second and fourth verses.'

'Ballad,' says Mr. Andrew Lang, 'is, in ordinary use, a term for any narrative poem, usually in the simple measure, of which a notable example is :



“ Lord William was buried in St. Mary's kirk,  
 Lady Margaret in Mary's quire ;  
 Out o' the lady's grave grew a bonny red rose,  
 And out o' the knight's a briar.”

‘Such poems may be written in the most civilized ages by the most cultivated authors—by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, or Sir Charles Hanbury Williams. But these and similar compositions are mere mimicries of what is more technically styled the ballad—the narrative *Volks-leid*, or popular tale in verse.’

The Scottish ballads are vastly superior to the English ‘in vigour, poetic touch, and the moving of supernatural awe.’ And this is all the more remarkable when we consider the fact that in the higher forms of poetry England is the superior of Scotland. All known ballads have been collected by Professor Child, of Harvard, in his *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*.

One of the circumstances which must be reckoned as favourable to literature in the sixteenth century was the patronage and encouragement extended to it by Queen Elizabeth, who was herself ‘very learned and addicted to poetical composition.’ She also possessed the art of gathering round her the most intellectual and gifted spirits of the age. ‘The study of the belles-lettres was in some measure identified with the courtly and arbitrary principles of the time, not, perhaps, so much from any enlightened spirit in those who supported such principles as from a desire of opposing the Puritans and other malcontents, whose religious doctrines taught them to despise some departments of elegant literature, and utterly to condemn others.’ This spirit of opposition to the Puritans, who condemned the drama for its immorality, and not without some cause, was one of the main reasons why that branch of literature obtained the support of Elizabeth and her successors. The fact that a majority of the poets were either courtiers themselves, or were dependent in a measure on the patronage of courtiers, and were constantly smiled upon and even rewarded by the Queen, could not fail to give a tone to the poetry of the day.

A writer in the *Edinburgh Review* expresses the opinion that this era was ‘by far the mightiest in the history of English literature, or indeed of human intellect and capacity.’ Speaking of the sixty or seventy years that elapsed from the middle of the reign of Elizabeth to the period of the Restoration, the same writer says there never was anything like it. ‘In point of real



force and originality of genius, neither the age of Pericles, nor the age of Augustus, nor the times of Leo X., nor of Louis XIV., can come at all into comparison; for in that short period we shall find the names of almost all the very great men that this nation has ever produced.' The names of two of our most illustrious poets, Spenser and Shakespeare, are amongst those cited in proof of the truth of this statement. It will not be contended by the most ardent that the age was without faults or blemishes. With all its ardour, its eloquence, its high conceits, its poets, no less than its prose-writers, have been accused of 'the Elizabethan fault of excessive wordiness and fantastic wit.' But these are easily excused in such an age.

First amongst the poets of his age, in time and in genius, stands Edmund Spenser, the author of the *Faerie Queene*. This great work shares the fate of incompletion with Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and more than one great epic. Had it been completed, it would have been a monster poem, for Spenser intended it to contain no less than twelve books, of which only six survive. It is perhaps fortunate that the other half was lost, and it might even have gained in value if it lacked half of what remains, for it is admitted that the strength of the work lies almost entirely in the first three books. Each book constitutes a separate poem, sufficiently long. Prince Arthur, who 'flits from song to song,' forms a kind of connecting-link. Each book was to have been dedicated to the chivalrous adventures of a certain virtue, the probationary personages uniting at last in the Fairy Court of Gloriana. Its author was so great that his immeasurable superiority over his contemporaries is said not only to have raised him above their envy, but even to have gained for him their love. Even the 'Satiric Nash' calls him the 'heavenly Spenser.' Not one worthy competitor can be found whose name can be ranked with his as an exponent of the delights of fairyland. As Hazlitt has said, 'If Ariosto transports us into the regions of romance, all Spenser's poetry is fairyland.' He cannot be called the founder of a school, for he has never been successfully imitated, though some have made the attempt, as we shall see later on. He is a school in himself. Yet critics have differed as to his merits. Hume is as faint in his praise as Hazlitt is enthusiastic in his eulogy. The manner of Spenser was formed, to a certain extent, upon the Italian model, and



yet he is as unlike the Italian poets in many respects as he is unlike all other English poets. He stands alone—the second of our four grand old masters of poetry.

‘In the period between Chaucer and Surrey,’ says Mr. Court-hope in his exhaustive work on English poetry, ‘we see the mediæval current running with preponderating power, blended only with a faint national colour derived from Chaucer’s dramatic genius, and with an equally slight tinge of classicism, reflected from his study of Ovid, Virgil, and Statius. The increasing strength of the Renaissance is indicated, through the sixteenth century, by a profusion of superficial classical imagery, which mixes itself, in naïve incongruity, with the allegorical forms peculiar to the learning of the Middle Ages. The spirit of this period is illustrated and summed up in the poetry of Spenser.’

The latter half of the sixteenth century is ornamented, too, with the name of Shakespeare. ‘It was the age when Bacon’s vast intellect (and he also may be called a poet in the wealth and pregnancy of his imagery) was beginning to map out the geography of all science; when Jonson was anatomizing the surface “humours,” of society, and reconstructing on a Gothic stage the principles of the ancient drama; when Spenser was weaving faith, morals, history, and intrigue into his endless web of romance; when Sidney was impersonating in a nobler shape the departed spirit of chivalry; and when language itself was running riot in novelty in the euphuism of Lyly. The “myriad-minded” poet is a fit type of this variegated age: his apothegms would construct a moral philosophy; his maxims a system of enlightened policy; his observations a treatise on natural history; his characters a psychological discourse on human nature.’

The classes of subjects chosen by Shakespeare are the same as those adopted by other writers of his time—namely, the most striking portions of ancient and modern history, and the romances of the Italian novelists. His methods of composition, ‘with some degrading peculiarities of style,’ are also those of the age. Everything else was his own, and his individual power was such as was possessed by no other writer of any country or any time. The marvel (and the pity, in the light of modern investigation) is that our knowledge of his personal history is so limited. His modesty seems to have been as marked as his genius. Though



his plays were popular, yet his transcendent genius did not begin to be fully recognised until a full century after his death. It was in the fulness of time, nevertheless, that Shakespeare came to supply a want and to satisfy a craving. Professor Dowden has told us that 'in the closing years of the sixteenth century the life of England ran high. The revival of learning had enriched the national mind with a store of new ideas and images ; the reformation of religion had been accomplished, and its fruits were now secure ; those conspiracies against the Queen's life had recently been foiled, and her rival, the Queen of Scots, had perished on the scaffold ; the huge attempt of Spain against the independence of England had been defeated by the gallantry of English seamen, aided by the winds of heaven. English adventurers were exploring untravelled lands and distant oceans ; English citizens were growing in wealth and importance ; the farmers made the soil give up twice its former yield ; the nobility, however fierce their private feuds and rivalries might be, gathered around the Queen as their centre. It was felt that England was a power in the continent of Europe. Men were in a temper to think human life, with its action and its passions, a very important and interesting thing. They did not turn away from this world, and despise it in comparison with a heavenly country, as did many of the finest souls in the Middle Ages ; they did not, like the writers of the age of Queen Anne, care only for " the town " ; it was man that they cared for, and the whole of manhood—its good and evil, its greatness and grotesqueness, its laughter and its tears. When men cared thus about human life, their imagination craved living pictures and visions of it.'

This craving it was that Shakespeare came to satisfy, and he satisfied it as no writer had ever done before, and as none has ever done since his day. Amongst the innumerable critics who have dwelt upon the genius and influence of this, the greatest writer in the history of English literature, we can only refer to a few, whose names may be suggestive to the student. Sir Walter Scott, Campbell, Leigh Hunt, Schlegel (a celebrated German writer), Hazlitt, Coleridge, Hallam, and Lamb have written copiously on the subject. It has been said by the translator of Schlegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* that of these 'Schlegel was the finest critic, Coleridge the



finest of illustrators, and Hazlitt the finest commentator on Shakespeare.'

Quaint, but powerful and suggestive, are the words in which Thomas Carlyle expresses, in that rugged English of his, the debt which the world of letters owes to this great master. We will quote some passages from his article on *The Hero as a Poet*, a work which, with the one fault of brevity, stands by itself in the domain of literary criticism: 'As Dante, the Italian man, was sent into our world to embody musically the religion of the Middle Ages, the Religion of our Modern Europe, its Inner Life, so Shakespeare, we may say, embodies for us the Outer Life of our Europe as developed then, its chivalries, courtesies, humours, ambitions, what practical way of thinking, acting, looking at the world men then had. As in Homer we may still construe Old Greece, so in Shakespeare and Dante, after thousands of years, what our modern Europe was, in Faith and in Practice, will still be legible. Dante has given us the Faith or soul; Shakespeare, in a not less noble way, has given us the Practice or body. This latter also we were to have; a man was sent for it, the man Shakespeare. . . . Italy produced the one world-voice; we English had the honour of producing the other. Curious enough how, as it were by mere accident, this man came to us. I think always, so great, quiet, complete and self-sufficing is this Shakespeare, had the Warwickshire Squire not prosecuted him for deer-stealing, we had perhaps never heard of him as a Poet. The woods and skies, the rustic Life of Man in Stratford there, had been enough for this man! But, indeed, that strange out-budding of our whole English existence, which we call the Elizabethan Era, did not it too come as of its own accord?'

And once again: 'In some sense it may be said that this glorious Elizabethan Era with its Shakespeare, as the outcome and flowerage of all which had preceded it, is itself attributable to the Catholicism of the Middle Ages. The Christian Faith, which was the theme of Dante's song, had produced the Practical Life which Shakespeare was to sing. For Religion then, as it now and always is, was the soul of Practice; the primary vital fact in men's life. And remark here, as rather curious, that Middle-Age Catholicism was abolished, so far as Acts of Parliament could abolish it, before]Shakespeare, the noblest product of it, made



his appearance. He did make his appearance nevertheless. Nature at her own time, with Catholicism or what else might be necessary, sent him forth ; taking small thought of Acts of Parliament. . . . This Elizabethan Era, and all its nobleness and blessedness, came without proclamation, preparation of ours. Priceless Shakespeare was the free gift of Nature ; given altogether silently—received altogether silently, as if it had been a thing of little account. And yet, very literally, it is a priceless thing.' In these and such-like noble words does one of the other great ones of the Earth pour forth his soul, without an apparent suspicion of the doubts concerning his Hero which we have reverted to elsewhere in this volume.

'Of what is commonly called our Elizabethan literature,' says Dr. Craik, 'the greater portion appertains to the reign, not of Elizabeth, but of James—to the seventeenth, not to the sixteenth century. The common name, nevertheless, is the fair and proper one. It sprung up in the age of Elizabeth, and was mainly the product of influences which belonged to that age, though their effect extended into another. It was born of and ripened by that sunny morning of a new day—"great Eliza's golden time"—when a general sense of security had given men ease of mind and disposed them to freedom of thought, while the economical advancement of the country put life and spirit into everything, and its growing power and renown filled and elevated the national heart.' The same writer sagaciously points out, moreover, that the Elizabethan literature had a double parentage : 'If that brilliant day was its mother, the previous night of storm was its father.'

The accession of James the First of England and Sixth of Scotland did not in any way tend to lessen the effect of the great impulse which literature had received. He was himself a voluminous writer on subjects varying 'from predestination to tobacco,' and had issued a work entitled *Essays of a Prentice in the Divine Art of Poesie, with the Rewlis and Cantelis to be pursued and avoided*. Moreover, some of the great writers of the age of Elizabeth were still wielding the pen with unabated vigour. The Queen, Anne of Denmark, was an admirer of the form of entertainment known as the masque, and did all in her power to encourage its development as an art. Ben Jonson, who was the author of no less than thirty-five of these 'courtly



compliments,' brought the art to its highest point of perfection. Of these masques the finest were the *Masque of Oberon*, the *Masque of Queens*, and *Paris Anniversary*.

Though such works were marred by fulsome compliments, yet their beauty of diction was sufficient to atone in some measure for the decline of the dramatic art which is accounted to have come to an end with Shirley, who wrote about forty dramatic pieces and died in 1666. In a preface which he wrote for the first collection of part of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher in 1647 he says: 'Now, reader, in this tragical age, where the theatre hath been so much outacted, congratulate thy own happiness that, in this silence of the stage, thou hast a liberty to read these inimitable plays—to dwell and converse in these immortal groves—which were only showed our fathers in a conjuring glass, as suddenly removed as represented.' The Long Parliament suppressed the drama by an ordinance of the Lords and Commons passed on September 2, 1642. It set forth that 'public sports do not well agree with public calamities, nor public stage-plays with the seasons of humiliation, this being an exercise of sad and pious solemnity, and the other being spectacles of pleasure, too commonly expressing lascivious mirth and levity. . . . While these sad causes and set times of humiliation do continue, public stage-plays shall cease and be forborne.'

The literature of the Cavaliers was not remarkable for any high order of merit. Their poetry in the main was lyrical, and Carew, Denham, Herrick, Waller, Suckling, and Lovelace were its chief exponents. It is expressively described by Collier as 'the sparkling, spontaneous efforts of a genius that poured forth its sweet and living waters in spite of overwhelming floods of wine and dense fumes of tobacco-smoke.' While some of their verses are gay, graceful, and polished, there are some, again, which are stained with the marks of vice and licentiousness. Butler was their greatest poet.

The writings of the Puritans were of a different order. They were the outcome of a deep religious thoughtfulness which was fed and fostered by the habit of life which they adopted for themselves. The triumph of the Roundheads came with the end of the Civil War and the execution of Charles. But the proudest period of Puritan literature was yet to come. Milton had already given proof of his transcendent genius in *L'Allegro*, *Il*



*Penseroso*, and *Comus*. But the star of his genius did not reach its zenith until, after long years of political trouble and sore bodily affliction, he produced the greatest epic in the English language, and laid the old story of *Paradise Lost* again before the world.

The so-called Metaphysical poets belong exclusively to the seventeenth century. The title was conferred upon them by Dr. Johnson.<sup>1</sup> The earliest of these is Dr. John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's, an accomplished writer of voluminous verse. These poets are described as 'writers in whom the intellectual faculty obtains an enormous and disproportionate supremacy over sentiment and feeling,' as being ever on the look-out for ingenious and unexpected analogies, usually false, and based upon some equivocation of language. 'An idea,' says Mr. Shaw, 'is racked into every conceivable distortion; the most remote comparisons, the obscurest recesses of historical and scientific allusion, are ransacked to furnish comparisons which no reader can suggest to himself, and which, when presented to him by the perverse ingenuity of the poet, fill him with a strange mixture of astonishment and shame, like the distortions of the posture-master or the tricks of sleight-of-hand.' In these graphic words we have an expressive description of the corrupt taste which is evinced in the writings of the poets of the first half of the seventeenth century. Almost every poet of the time was infected by it. The germ of the disease has been traced to Spain and Italy, but its naturalization may be placed as early as Lyly, 'the English Gongora,' who was born about the year 1554, and whose works are tinctured with affectation and absurdity, 'with an ingenious jargon' which became the fashion of his day.

But in spite of all that has been written in terms which savour of adverse criticism concerning the metaphysical school, it is generally allowed that they played no small part in the education of the correct and artificial school of poets which came into being in the reigns of William, Anne, and George I. The metaphysical poets came to an end with Abraham Cowley, who must be accounted the greatest of them all. So deeply was he imbued with the 'metaphysical' spirit that he even borrowed occasionally the very words and images of Donne. Though his learning was vast, his style of writing is strangely unequal. Rising at

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Craik says it was conferred by Dryden.



times to heights of nervous grandeur, he sinks again into depths of weakness and simplicity. But King Charles II. said truly that 'Mr. Cowley had not left behind him a better man in England,' when he had been laid to rest between Chaucer and Spenser in the Poets' Corner at Westminster.

The reign of Charles I. was especially prolific in poetry, and that, too, of a very superior kind. Indeed, it has been truly said that the quantity of beautiful verse which it has bequeathed to us is wonderful. The themes and the tones of the poetical exercises which mark this period are immensely varied. 'The forms in which fancy disported itself embrace almost all that are possible, except some of the most arduous ; the tone of sentiment shifted from the gravest to the gayest, from rapturous devotion to playful levity, from tragic tearfulness to fantastic wit, from moral solemnity to indecent licence ; the themes ranged from historical fact to invented fable, from the romantic story to the scene of domestic life, from momentous truths to puerile trifles.' Amongst the dramatists of the time the most notable names are those of Massinger, Ford, and Shirley. After Shakespeare, Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher, the greatest English dramatist is Philip Massinger, whose first published play, *The Virgin Martyr*, appeared in 1620. Only nineteen of the thirty-eight plays which he is said to have written have been handed down to us.

Mr. Stopford Brooke divides the poetry of this period into five distinct classes—Lyric, Satirical, Rural, Spenserian, and Religious. The lyric poems are short songs and epigrams on the passing interests of the day, on the charms of court beauties, or 'the fleeting forms of fleeting love.' Satirical poetry became more and more bitter in tone as the Royalists and the Puritans drifted wider apart. The increase of appreciation of country life and scenery is seen in such rural poems as Denham's *Cooper's Hill*, which introduces the class of poetry which makes natural landscape the ground of philosophic meditation. The Spenserians are those who imitate Spenser, as Phineas and Giles Fletcher, Henry More, and John Chalkhill. Of the religious poets the greatest are George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, and Richard Crashaw. William Habington, a Roman Catholic poet of considerable power, 'mingled his devotion to his religion with the praises of his wife under the name of *Castara*.'



The 'correct' school of poetry belongs to the closing years of the seventeenth century and the first quarter of the eighteenth. The style of the poets of the middle period of Elizabeth's reign, though natural, was generally unrestrained by definite rules. The style of such poets as Shakespeare and Spenser was not only natural, but artistic. This dual quality, however, did not extend to the minor poets, who, inspired only by their feelings, wrote without much care for the form in which those feelings were expressed. A new departure is traceable in the work of the poets who flourished between the latter part of Elizabeth's reign and the period of the Civil War. The national life had grown chill, and the want of art had begun to make itself felt. 'The far-fetched images, the hazarded meanings, the over-fanciful way of putting thoughts, the sensational expression of feeling in which the Elizabethan poets indulged, not only appeared in all their ugliness when they were inspired by no warm feeling, but were indulged in far more than before.' To such an extent was this method eventually carried that their poetry has been accused of having no clear meaning, and thus the natural style, unregulated by art, had become unnatural.

It was at this juncture that the need for definite rules began to be most keenly felt, and there were two influences which partly caused and partly supported this desire. The growing influence of Milton's works was one. The other was, to quote the words of Mr. Stopford Brooke, 'that of the movement all over Europe towards inquiry into the right way of doing things, and into the truth of things. . . . In poetry it produced a school of criticism which first took form in France, and the influence of Boileau, La Fontaine, and others who were striving after greater finish and neatness of expression told on England now.' It is commonly assumed that our modern English poetry first showed a disposition to imitate the French models after the Restoration, but the truth is that it had begun to do so at an earlier date. Malherbe, Racan, and Malleville are to be accounted the true fathers of Waller, Carew, Lovelace, and Suckling. 'The colder and more correct spirit of art' is seen to develop in the writings of Waller, Denham, and Cowley. 'Vigorous form was given to that spirit by Dryden, and perfection of artifice added to it by Pope. The *artificial* style succeeded and extinguished the *natural*.'



A new school of poets, called Augustan, from the so-called Augustan reign of Queen Anne, now arose. Of this Dryden must be accounted the first exponent, and Pope an immediate follower. The passions were set aside for those things in which intellect, conscience, and the social and political instincts play the largest part, and in which the animal nature gives way to refinement and taste. Philosophy and satire are also accorded a prominent place in the poetry of this new school. The chief writer of verse on the popular side after the Restoration was Andrew Marvel, first of patriots and wits, whose satires embody the Puritans' wrath with the vices of the Court and King, and his shame for the disgrace of England amongst the nations. Dryden, too, was satirical, his *Absalom and Achitophel* being the foremost of English satires, and the first good example of that party poetry which Pope indulged in with still more of the spirit of gall and bitterness. The satires of Swift were coarse in language, but never failed of the mark at which they were aimed.

Yet another new school of poetry came into being in the declining years of Pope. Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd*, and Thomson's *Seasons*, the former appearing in 1725 and the latter in 1730, were its pioneers. Thomson is the poet who connects the age of Pope with that of Crabbe. So great was the change which manifested itself in the popular taste and sentiment in the beginning of the eighteenth century that it is most fitly described as a revolution. 'The cold and clear-cut artificial spirit of that classicism which is exhibited in its highest form in the writings of Pope' gave way gradually but surely to what is known as the romantic type in poetry. This new school embraced many poets of varying moods and unequal merits. Under the general heading of 'The Dawn of Romantic Poetry' Mr. Shaw has grouped the most notable exponents of the new methods. Besides those we have already mentioned we find the names of James Beattie, author of *The Minstrel*; Robert Blair, author of *The Grave*; William Collins, the lyrical poet whose career was all too brief; Mark Akenside, whose philosophy found a vent in *The Pleasures of the Imagination*; Thomas Gray, who gave the world the inimitable *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*; William Cowper, pre-eminently the poet of the domestic affections and religious feelings; Thomas Chatterton,



the precocious genius whose brief story is so full of woe; George Crabbe, the poet of the passions in humble life; and, lastly, Robert Burns, the greatest poet that Scotland has produced.

Burns was not much more than sixteen years old when he wrote some of his best and most striking poems. Surrounded by circumstances the reverse of encouraging, he composed his tender and pensive songs, his scathing satires, and his unrivalled lyrics. Truly this poet was 'born, not made.' In writing about this ruling passion of his life, he says: 'Poetry was a darling walk for my mind; but it was only indulged in according to the humour of the hour. I had usually a dozen or more pieces on hand; I took up one or other as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, when once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they got vent in rhyme; and then the conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet.' A collection of the poetical tributes written in memory of Robert Burns would form a pleasing volume. The best are those by Wordsworth, Montgomery, and Campbell. The following lines are by the last-mentioned:

Farewell, high chief of Scottish song!  
That couldst alternately impart  
Wisdom and rapture in thy page,  
And brand each vice with satire strong;  
Whose lines are mottoes of the heart,  
Whose truths electrify the sage.

Nor skilled one flame alone to fan:  
His country's high-souled peasantry  
What patriot-pride he taught!—how much  
To weigh the inborn worth of man!  
And rustic life and poverty  
Grow beautiful beneath his touch.

The religious principles of Burns have been censured by some critics with great severity. 'Burns was deeply impressed,' says a writer in the *Saturday Magazine*, 'with the sentiment of religion—a sentiment in which we can hardly conceive how, by any possibility, a real poet can be deficient; yet his devotional feelings do not appear to have sprung from sound religious principles, nor to have been sustained by regular, constant, and systematic acts of worship. But it is almost a vain task



to look for anything of the nature of dogmatic theology in the works of our English poets. It occurred to the Rev. Stopford Brooke to give a course of lectures in St. James's Chapel Royal, in the year 1872, on this interesting subject, which have resulted, happily for the historical student, in a valuable volume. In it he speaks of the growth of the Poetry of Man and of Nature. But even what he calls the devotional element has evidently been found after most careful research. The devotional element which is traceable in the writings of Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, and some of the Puritan poets, died away in the critical school which began with Dryden and ended with Pope. It is with Pope that Mr. Brooke really begins, dealing in one chapter with the theology he finds between the ages of Pope and Cowper. But he tells us that 'the poets of England ever since Cowper have been more and more theological, till we reach such men as Tennyson or Browning, whose poetry is overcrowded with theology. But the theology of the poets is different from that of Churches and Sects, in this especially, that it is not formulated into propositions, but is the natural growth of their own hearts. They are, by their very nature, strongly individual; they grow more by their own special genius than by the influence of the life of the world around them, and they are, therefore, sure to have a theology—that is, a Doctrine of God in His relation to man, nature, and their own soul—which will be independent of conventional religious thought. They will be, as poets, free from those claims of dogma which influence ordinary men from their youth up, and from the religious tendencies of surrounding opinion. Their theology will therefore want the logical order which prevails in confessions and articles, and as each will give expression to it in vivid accordance with his natural character, it will be a different thing in each.' This, it is clear, is true only of their poetry, for in their everyday intercourse with men they each would be, doubtless, the professor of a creed.

Mr. Brooke becomes most eloquent when dealing with the influence which the French Revolution worked upon Wordsworth and upon the world—that great upheaval which 'gave sudden, clear, and terrible force to the long-prepared ideas of Europe.' It did not come upon the great religious poet unprepared, for he was himself a natural republican. In the school



of nature he had learned the lesson of obedience to God's power. It could not be, he tells us,

But that one tutored thus should look with awe  
Upon the faculties of man, receive  
Gladly the highest promises, and hail  
As best the government of equal rights  
And individual worth.

The influence of the Revolution was far-reaching. As De Tocqueville says: 'The Revolution had no peculiar territory. It was not made for France alone, but for the world, and its result was to blot out in some sort from the map all the ancient frontiers. In spite of laws, traditions, character, and language, it brought men together on a common ground, changed enemies into compatriots, and formed above national compatriots an intellectual country common to all, of which men of all nations could become citizens. . . . Its end was the general rights and duties of all men in political and social matters.' Thus it taught, in the highest and best sense, that theory which is so liable to abuse and misapplication—the common Fatherhood of God and the equal Brotherhood of Men. This new doctrine Wordsworth imbibed in all its fulness and force of appeal. He did so almost unconsciously. He could not help himself. In this awakening of liberty he saw only the hand of the Almighty, and the feeling rather than the conviction influenced his verse. For him

From hour to hour the antiquated earth  
Beat like the heart of man.

He saw love in all around him. There was given, as De Quincey says, to the whole system of his own thoughts and feelings a firmer tone, and a sense of the awful realities which surround the mind. Thus, though he continued to be a revealer of Nature, he became also the Poet of Man, with an elevating and softening influence upon his age.

The first half of the nineteenth century saw the rise of a new school of poets. The Lake School, as it was called, included three contemporaneous writers of very nearly equal powers, who also lived in close proximity to one another. Of these the greatest was William Wordsworth, who founded the school. Southey and Coleridge were his associates. The best critics are almost unanimous in pronouncing the title as a misnomer, which was applied to them at first in a spirit of ridicule by



some of the reviews. Yet the term has become historical and permanent, chiefly, perhaps, on account of its picturesqueness. Wordsworth loved the scenery of the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland when a boy. The best years of his manhood were passed amidst its soul-inspiring vales and mountains. At Rydal Mount, overlooking the waters of Rydal Lake, he spent his closing years, apart from the busier haunts of men.

It is not to be wondered at that a man who made poetry so completely his business in life, as well as his recreation, should be the founder of a new style. He was a firm believer in the extensive field which Nature herself affords for poetic purposes, and proceeded with firmness and a singular lack of affectation to make the most of it. The chief aim, at least in his earlier poems, was to choose situations and occurrences from everyday life, and to tell of them in language which, though poetical in a true sense, was nevertheless such as is in common use amongst men. They were coloured, but not highly coloured, and were always recognisable under his treatment as types of real men or descriptions of real places. In later years the poet rose to greater heights, and the ridicule which was poured out upon him and his school died away. *The Excursion* is one of the grandest philosophical poems in the English language, and nothing could be more touching than *We are Seven*, a typical example of another phase of his genius. The perseverance and stoic indifference to the sneers of reviewers, which characterized the three Lake Poets, were rewarded before their deaths with the full appreciation of a grateful public, and the day is far distant when the refining influence of their manner shall cease to be felt.

Dr. Dowden, Professor of English Literature in the University of Dublin, in an exhaustive and able lecture on the Literary Movement from Gray to Wordsworth, is reported as having used these eloquent words :

‘ In Coleridge a great romancist was conjoined with a great idealist. In Wordsworth a great naturalist was conjoined with a great idealist. Neither is sentimental in the lowest sense of the word, though perhaps some of Coleridge’s poems, for example the poem on *Love*, approach dangerously near to the sentimental. But both Coleridge and Wordsworth have that expansion of the heart and reverence for human passion



which came with the emotional outbreak. Both Coleridge and Wordsworth, however, to be understood, must be approached by the line of the revolutionary thought and feeling of the eighteenth century. It was only in retrospect, looking back from maturer years upon the season of his ardent youth, that Wordsworth as a poet tells us of the boundless joy and hope breathed into him by the newly awakened spirit in France. From first to last what was best in the revolutionary spirit of the eighteenth century lived in Wordsworth. When we understand this we will understand his work as a poet. There was now a growing tendency towards more transcendental conceptions in metaphysics, ethics, and theology, which transcendental conceptions told in two ways upon literature : first, in animating and ennobling the feeling of external nature ; and, secondly, in ennobling the idea of man, as possessing within himself, in heart and conscience, the authentic oracle of God. The dry orthodoxy of the earlier part of the century was found unsatisfactory in a period of quickened emotions and quickened imagination. The conception of God as the Author of Nature and the moral Governor of the universe, presiding over it from afar, and operating through the agency of second causes, gave place to the conception of God as immanent in Nature and present to the heart and to the moral being of man.'

It may fairly be asserted that no poet ever exercised a more direct and elevating influence on his contemporaries than did Sir Walter Scott. No Scotchman of his time, as Carlyle says, was more entirely Scotch than he ; ' the good and the not so good, which all Scotchmen inherit, ran through every fibre of him.' It was in his writings, prose and poetry alike, that the highest and best sentiments of his countrymen found their most forcible expression. When Scott spoke, it was Scotland that spoke in him, and through him. His genius as a poet was not so great, perhaps not even so appealing, as that of Burns, but if we are forced into a comparison we cannot forget that Scott the poet is dwarfed by Scott the novelist, and that these two are the same man.

Does a modern critic go too far in saying that there has been nothing to compare with him in the past ? If not, he can hardly be accused of exaggeration when he follows up his statement by declaring that it is altogether improbable that there



will be such another exponent of his country's feelings in the future. The grand memorial which gives a majestic finish to one of the most noble thoroughfares in the world is not too imposing a tribute to the memory of one who brought the Highland and the Lowland peoples into sympathetic union and patriotic brotherhood. Marvellous and far-reaching was the magnetic influence of the Wizard of the North, who within his lifetime saw justice done to the Celtic race, and not only saw, but knew that he had caused, an almost universal revival of interest in the romantic history of his native land. The popularity of Campbell was at its height, Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge were contending with only a measure of success against the adverse taste of the time, when Scott took up his pen and soon made the world re-echo with his song.

He revived the English metrical romance, and increased the store of ballad poetry of which his native land had not before been destitute, but in respect of which it needed enriching. He delighted all his readers with a series of metrical tales in which are to be found a revival of the manners and customs, the events and incidents, of the days of chivalry. His poems were received with an amount of popular favour for which there is no parallel in the annals of English literature. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* was published in 1805, and within six years from that date twenty-five thousand copies of this exquisite poem had been sold. But he was not without a rival in the swift race for fame. His popularity had begun to experience a slight decline when the star of Lord Byron rose high above the horizon. In 1812 *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* appeared, and its author was elevated at once by general consent to the first place amongst English poets. The Spenserian stanza became once more the popular mode of poetic expression. The benevolent misanthrope, slave to degrading vices though he was known to be, became the hero of the hour. 'The personal character of Byron,' says Mr. Chambers, 'was an extraordinary mixture of benevolence and misanthropy, and of aspiration after excellence, with a practical enslavement to degrading vices. The only key to the mystery is to be found in that theory which represents the temperament of genius in its extreme forms, as a species of insanity.'

At the same time the voice of Erin was heard in the sweet



music of Thomas Moore. The *Odes of Anacreon* had appeared in 1800, when the new poet was only twenty years of age. But it was not until 1813 that he gave to the world that collection of *Irish Melodies* which is one of the most delightful repertoires of united verse and music which the genius of poesy has produced in any age or any country. In 1817 he established his claim to a place in the first rank of modern poets by the publication of *Lalla Rookh*, 'an Oriental tale, or rather a series of tales, conceived in the voluptuous spirit of Asiatic poetry, and replete with the richest Asiatic imagery.' This poem is said to have brought him in the sum of three thousand pounds. He has been aptly called 'a conjurer with words, which he makes to serve rather as wings for his thoughts than as the gross attire or embodiment with which they must be encumbered to render them palpable or visible.' Nothing could surpass his elegance or his wit, the natural facility with which he chooses the most apt and graceful form in which to convey his meaning. No words in the whole range of Irish literature are more fully attuned to

The harp that once through Tara's halls  
The soul of music shed.

Generally speaking, the poetical literature of the first half of the nineteenth century was of a high order of merit. It has been truly said that 'any comparison of the Elizabethan poetry, save Spenser's alone, with that of the nineteenth century would show an extravagant predilection for the mere name of antiquity.' Mr. Spalding, writing in 1860, says: 'We are, surely, quite safe in believing that the lovers of our poetical literature, when they have ranged over all its treasures, will find their richest stores of delight, after Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, in the dramatic group which is headed by Fletcher and Jonson, and in the modern one in which are found, and not unaccompanied, Coleridge and Wordsworth, Scott and Byron. Exact comparison of the two groups is impossible; and, if it could be instituted, it would be uninformative. But, while most of the moderns we are considering stand morally much higher than our dramatic ancients, it is no more than an act of justice to our own times to bear in mind this fact, that both of the illustrious bands excel more in originality of genius than in skill or perfection of execution.' The characteristic just



referred to is to be noted as a feature which marks the greater part of the poetry of this period. Lack of polish in the language used, and want of symmetry in the treatment of the subject, have been condemned more than once as the conspicuous faults of the poets in question. It has been suggested that the cause may be traced in 'the reaction which took place against the cold elaboration of the preceding century,' and 'the spirited vehemence of excitement,' from which the writers inhaled so much of their power.

The student cannot fail to observe that the dawn of each of the last three centuries of our history was marked by a period of keen literary excitement, and not only so, but that in each case the particular excitement of the time is to be traced to a foreign influence. In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the age of Elizabeth and James I., the influence came from the Italian school; in the beginning of the eighteenth, the Augustan age of Queen Anne, the literature of France asserted itself; and the nineteenth owes as much to the inspiration caught from the literature of Germany. The German tone is echoed most clearly, perhaps, in the works of Wordsworth and his so-called school. The cluster of poets who commanded the attention of the world while the nineteenth century was yet young was in number, as in greatness, a notable one. To the names already mentioned must be added those of Campbell, Keats, and Shelley. Nor can we omit from the roll of honour such sweet singers as Reginald Heber and Felicia Hemans. Surely a memorable and illustrious group, which marks the time in which they wrote as a great literary epoch. One of them, at least, was recognised as a classic before his decease. Amongst his English contemporaries Wordsworth stands alone as the poet of everyday life.

The peculiar manner which is supposed to be distinctive of what has been persistently called the Lake School is first found in the *Lyrical Ballads*, which were published in 1798 and 1800. As a specimen of this style Dr. Craik quotes from *The Fountain* and *The Affliction of Margaret*. The later style of the poet is of a more sublime description, as *Laodamia*, and the *Poems of the Imagination*. But the nature of all his work, even in his highest flights of imagination or of genius, is such that he who runs may read. As a writer of sonnets he has few equals. With



regard to his power in this form of verse, we may quote the words which he applies to Milton :

In his hand  
The thing became a trumpet, whence he blew  
Soul-animating strains.

The sonnet, which had been practically abandoned in the eighteenth century, has had since the time of Wordsworth a kind of *renaissance*.

The nineteenth century was not productive of great things in the domain of dramatic literature, yet the names of Sheridan Knowles, Henry Taylor, and Thomas Noon Talfourd remind us that the art had not altogether died out. Knowles modelled his style upon the manner of the Elizabethan dramatists, copying Massinger more closely than any other. His work is not of the intense school, but is nevertheless effective and artistic.

On the death of Wordsworth, the laurel was given to Alfred Tennyson. Never was laurel more worthily worn than by him who was 'caressed by critics, admired by all, imitated by not a few.' The genius of Tennyson was so highly appreciated, so fully grasped, and so universally acknowledged, during his lifetime that historians have been careful not to predict a permanence for his fame. Whatever may be conjectured by individual critics as to his chances of immortality, there can hardly be any reason to fear that the favour in which his work is held can be short-lived. It is freely admitted that he was more to his own age than any other poet has ever been to his, and he must ever be accorded an honourable, if not a foremost, place as an exponent, not merely of the genius, but of the purity of song.

Of the characteristics of more modern poetry we forbear to speak, for reasons which will be sufficiently obvious. To express our feeling with regard to the present age we cannot do better than quote the forcible words which were applied by Shelley to his own :

'The literature of England has arisen, as it were, from a new birth. In spite of the low-thoughted envy which would undervalue contemporary merit, our own will be a memorable age in intellectual achievements, and we live among such philosophers and poets as surpass beyond comparison any who have appeared since the last national struggle for civil and religious liberty.



The most unfailing herald, companion, and follower of the awakening of a great people to work a beneficial change in opinion or institution is poetry. . . . The persons in whom this power resides may often, as far as regards many portions of their nature, have little apparent correspondence with that spirit of good of which they are the ministers. But even whilst they deny and abjure, they are yet compelled to serve the power which is seated on the throne of their own soul. . . . Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration ; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present ; the words which express what they understand not ; the trumpets which sing to battle, and feel not what they inspire ; the influence which is moved not, but moves. Poets are the acknowledged legislators of the world.'



## POETS AND POEMS BEFORE CHAUCER

### TALIESIN, AND THE MERDDINS

*Flourished from 520-580*

TALIESIN, one of the most celebrated of the ancient British poets, and therefore styled Pen Beirdd, or Chief of the Bards, was the son of St. Henwg, of Caerleon-upon-Usk. He was partly educated at the college of Cuttwg, in Glamorgan. He was invited to the Court of Urien Rheged, where he resided for some time, and many of his poems are addressed to that chieftain. It is said of him that, being once fishing with Elffin, the son of Urien, at sea in a skin coracle, an Irish pirate ship seized him, and bore him away towards Ireland, but while his captors were at the height of their drunken mirth, Taliesin pushed his coracle into the sea, and got into it, with a shield in his hand, which he found in the ship, and with it he rowed the coracle until he approached the land. But, losing his shield, he was tossed about at the mercy of the waves, until he was rescued by Elffin, the son of Gwyddno, who introduced him to his father, and obtained for him a favourable reception and a grant of lands. He is ranked in the Triads with Merddin Emrys and Merddin ab Madog Morvryn, as the three baptismal bards of the Isle of Britain. Many of his works are still extant.

Merddin Emrys flourished about the middle of the fifth century. The Welsh Bruts, and Nennius, contain a detailed account of the fabulous birth and prophecies of Merddin in connection with Vortigern. Merddin, the son of Madog Morvryn, flourished from about 530 to 580. There are six of his poems extant. For further details concerning him the student is referred to Davies' *Mythology of the Druids*.

The name Merddin is sometimes written Merlin.



## THE LAY OF BEOWULF

*Written before 600*

THE Lay, or Tale, or Poem, of Beowulf is so called, not from the name of its author, but from the name of its hero, who seems to have been an historical character living in the sixth century. He was a 'Geät, and nephew of Hygelac, who is the Chochilaicus whom Gregory of Tours mentions as raiding the Frisian shore, and slain by its defenders.' Hygelac died in 520. His son was placed on the throne by Beowulf, who, after his death, reigned for fifty years. 'This brings the historic Beowulf up to about 570. But this historic personage has not much to do with the poem.'

The manuscript, which is amongst the Cotton MSS. of the British Museum, was written about A.D. 1000, but the poem is certainly of more ancient origin. It is indeed acknowledged to be the oldest epic in Europe, and was written on the Continent before 600 A.D. A recent writer, however, in the latest edition of Mr. Chambers' *Cyclopædia of English Literature*, has questioned its right to the name of epic. 'It has been said to be an epic,' he says, 'but it is more justly a narrative poem. It has neither the unity, the weight, the continuity, nor the mighty fates of an epic. Nevertheless, it reaches a spiritual unity from the consistency of the hero's character developed from daring youth to wise and self-sacrificing age. It reaches even excellence in the clearness with which its portraits are drawn and its natural scenery represented. Our power of natural description in poetry begins with *Beowulf*.' If length alone entitled a poem to be called by the name of epic, then the claim of *Beowulf* would be established beyond question, for it contains 6,356 short alliterative lines, of four accents each. Many full accounts and translations of this singular poem have been published. It is a Norse saga, the plot of which may be thus briefly described :

The hero, who is a Danish prince, and a lineal descendant of Woden, goes forth on two adventures. In the first he slays a fiendish cannibal called Grendel, and, encountering numerous perils by land and by water, overcomes them by the aid of enchanted weapons wielded by superhuman strength. In the second his own life is sacrificed in the attempt



to destroy a ferocious dragon or earthdrake. Metaphors are freely used throughout the poem, but it contains no more than five similes. A lack of similes, however, is a usual characteristic of Anglo-Saxon poetry. The poem sets forth, in a very romantic and picturesque way, many of the Gothic manners and superstitions. The following lines will convey an idea of the language in which it is written :

Thá com of môre,  
Under mist-hleodhum,  
Grendel gougan ;  
Goddess yrre bär.

Then came from the moor,  
Under mist-hills,  
Grendel to go ;  
God's ire he bare.

#### THE EMBARKING OF BEOWULF \* (*modernized*).

Then the well-geared heroes  
Stepped upon the stem, while the stream of ocean  
Whirled the sea against the sand. There into the ship's breast  
Bright and carved things of cost, carried then the heroes,  
And their armour well-arrayed. And the men out pushed  
Their tight ocean-wood on adventure long desired.  
Swiftly went above the waves, with a wind well fitted  
Likest to a fowl, their Floater, with the foam around its throat.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Till at last the Seaman saw the land ahead,  
Shining sea-cliffs, soaring headlands,  
Broad sea-nesses. So this Sailer of the sea  
Reached the sea-way's end.

#### CÆDMON, MONK OF WHITBY

*Died in 680 A.D., or thereabouts*

THE first English poet whose name is known with certainty was a monk of Whitby, named Cædmon. It has been thought by many historians that there were two poets of this name, the elder being the author of some verses on *The Beginning of Created Things*, and the younger the one of whom we are now about to speak. The former has therefore been distinguished from the latter by means of the epithet 'spurious,' as expressing the atmosphere of uncertainty which surrounds his name. It is with the younger or 'genuine' Cædmon that we now profess to deal.

Cædmon was a native of Northumbria, who lived and died in the latter half of the seventh century. He was the author of a remarkable *Paraphrase* of the Scriptures which takes rank

\* The name of the author of *Beowulf* is not known.



chronologically as the first English poem written on English soil. We are indebted to the Venerable Bede for the truly romantic story of Cædmon's first essay in poetical literature. Employed as a servant at the monastery of Whitby, he passed his days without any instructor, nourishing within his breast the innate love of sacred song, but unable to give adequate expression to the emotions which possessed him, or the images which his brain conjured up as the hours flew by. He could not even find a voice to chant the hymns and ballads he had learned. One evening, amid a company of rustics, he was mortified to find himself the only silent one, and having retired to the seclusion of a stable, he fell asleep. In his fitful sleep a stranger came to him and said, 'Cædmon, sing me something.' 'Alas! I cannot. It was for this cause I left the feast,' answered the youth. 'You must sing to me. Sing of *The Beginning of Created Things*,' insisted the stranger. Verse after verse flowed from the dreamer's lips. More strangely, he recalled them when he awoke, and went and recited them to the Abbess Hilda, and some of the scholars of the place. They tested his genuineness by giving him passages of the Bible to present in verse. Within a few hours, we are told, he composed a poem of wondrous sweetness. This strange and phenomenal outburst of song was looked upon as a miracle, and Cædmon, after some preliminary instruction, was enrolled amongst the monks. The rest of his life was spent in the composition of religious poems. Besides this dream-song, he left behind him other works which, though unfinished, are still extant. In bulk they are almost equal to half of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, being chiefly loose paraphrases of Scriptural passages. They may be roughly divided into two parts, based respectively on the Old and New Testaments. So striking is the similarity sometimes between his work and that of Milton that the latter has been accused, though doubtless unjustly, of plagiarism. 'Others after him,' says Bede, 'tried to make religious poems, but none could compare with him.'

The following lines will give an idea of the style and diction of Cædmon. They are from a description of the overthrow of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea.

Folc was afæred : Flód-egsa becwóm :  
 Gastas geomre : Geafon deathe-hweop :  
 Woldon here bleathe : Hámas finden :  
 A'c behindan beleac : Wyrð mid wæge :



Streamas stódon : Storm up-gewát :  
 Weollon wæl-benna : Wite-ród gefeol :  
 Heáh of heofonum : Hand-weore Godes—

which means, being translated :

(The) folk was afraid : flood-fear came in :  
 Ghosts murmuring gave (the) death-whoop :  
 Would (the) host blithely homes find :  
 And behind locked (them) : Fate with (the) wave.  
 Streams stood : Storm up-went :  
 Rolled corpses (of) men : (the) punishment-rod fell  
 High from heavens, hand-work of God.

Cædmon was the first Anglo-Saxon writer of note. Of his *Paraphrase* there is extant but a single MS. of the tenth century in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, consisting of 229 folio pages, 212 of which contain the account of the Creation and the falls of the angels and of man, and the story of Genesis down to the offering of Isaac, the Exodus of Israel, and part of the Book of Daniel. The remaining pages contain a poem of Christ and Satan. It is tolerably certain that this poetry, in its present form at least, is due to various authors, and was written at different times. Some critics have disputed the identification of the extant *Paraphrase* with the work of Bede's poet.

The fine Northumbrian poem known as *The Dream of the Holy Rood* has been ascribed to Cædmon.

Cædmon was one of those gifted men who have stamped the impress of their own minds and methods on the manners and literature of their country. 'He was the first Englishman—it may be the first individual of Gothic race—who exchanged the gorgeous images of the old mythology for the chaster beauties of Christian poetry.' From the sixth to the twelfth century, indeed, he seems to have been the great model whom all tried to imitate, though but few could equal. He was the acknowledged Father of English Poetry until Chaucer came and established a greater claim to that title. When, in the reign of King John, his body was discovered, it appears to have excited as much reverence as those of the kings and saints by which it was surrounded.

The manuscript which is supposed to contain the poems of Cædmon was given by Archbishop Ussher to Junius, and was left by him to the Bodleian Library.

The following lines, from Cædmon's *Paraphrase*, may be looked upon as a specimen of Anglo-Saxon poetry :



Tha of roderum wæs  
 Engel ælbeorht.  
 Ufan onsended.  
 White scyne wer.  
 On his wuldor—haman.  
 Se him cwom to frofre.  
 & to feorh-nere.  
 Mid lufan & mid lisse.  
 Se thone lig tosceaf.  
 Halig and heofon-beorht.  
 Hatan fyres.  
 Tosweop hine & toswende.  
 Thurh tha swithan miht.  
 Ligges leoma.  
 That hyra lice ne wæs.  
 Owiht geegled.

## THORPE'S TRANSLATION.

An all-bright angel  
 Sent from above,  
 A man of beauteous form,  
 In his garb of glory :  
 Who to them came for comfort,  
 And for their lives' salvation,  
 With love and with grace ;  
 Who the flame scattered  
 (Holy and heaven-bright)  
 Of the hot fire,  
 Swept it and dashed away,  
 Through his great might,  
 The beams of flame ;  
 So that their bodies were not  
 Injured aught.

The lines are a part of the *Song of Azariah*.

## CYNEWULF

THE second period of Old English poetry begins with Cynewulf, whose name in Latin is Kenulphus. Mr. Shaw says he was a monk of Winchester, and Abbot of Peterborough in 992, who was 'highly eulogized by a local historian.' In the opinion of many critics he was a native of Northumbria, but, according to others, a Mercian. 'It is difficult,' says Mr. Chambers, 'to conceive how a poet so well acquainted with the sea and the coasts of the sea should have written in Mercia. A Mercian might have been acquainted with the sea, but not impassioned by it as Cynewulf proves he is. Moreover, the sadness of his poetry, the constant regret for vanished glory, does not suit the life in Mercia at this time, when, from 718 to 796, Æthelbald and Offa had made Mercia the greatest kingdom in England ; but does suit the life in Northumbria, when, from 750 to 790, that kingdom had fallen into anarchy and decay. There are other critics who place him much later than the eighth century.'

Cynewulf signed his name in runic letters to four poems. These are *Juliana*, *Crist*, *The Fates of the Apostles*, and *Elene*. The two first are in the *Exeter Book*, and the third and fourth in the *Vercelli Book*. *Elene* was written when he was 'old and ready for death.' It contains 1,320 lines. Its subject is the finding of the True Cross by the Empress Helena. Other poems



have been attributed to him. All his poems were religious in subject and in tone. His greatest hero was Jesus Christ. 'The time is coming when his name will be more highly honoured amongst us, and his poetry better known. He had imagination; he anticipated, at a great distance, the Nature-poetry of the nineteenth century, especially the poets of the sea. . . . The heroic passages in his poems link us to our bold heathen forefathers, and yet are written by a Christian. Their spirit is still the spirit of England.'

### GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH

*Flourished circa 1152. Died 1154*

GEOFFREY, or Jeffery, of Monmouth, was a celebrated British historian who flourished in the reign of Stephen. He was born at Monmouth, and probably received his early education in the Benedictine monastery which flourished near that place. Tradition still points out the remains of a small apartment which is said to have been his study, but, unfortunately, the building thus indicated gives proof of an age greatly posterior to the time of the historian. Geoffrey became Archdeacon of Monmouth and, later, Bishop of St. Asaph, being consecrated in 1152. It is said by Magdeburg centuriators that he became a Cardinal also, but there is no clear proof of this.

Considerable obscurity hangs over the real origin of the *Chronicle*, or history, with which his name is associated. Leland, Bale, Pits, and Price inform us that Walter Mapes, or Calenius, then Archdeacon of Oxford, having amassed, during his travels in Armorica, an amount of materials illustrative of early British history, placed them in the hands of Geoffrey of Monmouth, for the purpose of getting them translated and arranged by that scholar. Nothing could have been more congenial to Geoffrey's tastes. He devoted himself to the task, and in a short time produced a chronicle of Britain in Latin prose, and a life of the Caledonian Merlin in Latin hexameters. Mr. Turner, in his *Vindication of the Ancient British Poems*, says: 'I believe the book of Geoffrey of Monmouth to be his own composition, and to abound with fable.' The *Chronicle* is divided into nine books. The work is altogether an extremely entertaining one, whatever



may be its value as a contribution to historical literature. It was versified in the Norman dialect by Wace, and again in English by Layamon; and it is to it that we owe Shakespeare's affecting story of *King Lear*, that of Sackville's *Ferrex and Porrux*, some of the finest episodes in the *Polyolbion*, and the exquisite fiction of *Sabrina* in the masque of *Comus*.

### THE TRAVELLER'S SONG

(Date uncertain)

*The Traveller's Song* is found in the celebrated Exeter MS., which was given to the Cathedral by Bishop Leofric in the reign of Edward the Confessor. It may have been written in the latter half of the tenth or the beginning of the eleventh century. It professes to chronicle the travels of a certain Gleeman, or wandering minstrel, a contemporary of Eormanric and of Ærtla. The poem opens with a sort of preface (like that prefixed to Alfred's metres), which is in verse and of almost equal antiquity with the poem. The historic allusions in the poem are valuable, as is also its geography. A translation of this poem has been furnished by Mr. Conybeare, but 'his transcript was an inaccurate one, and his version more faulty than it probably would have been had he lived to publish it.' The following translation of a few characteristic lines is from the pages of Mr. Guest :

Wide trável told—his word-store unlock'd,  
He who most Greatness over Earth  
And Nations visited. Oft in hall he flourish'd;  
Him from among the Myrgings, though mean in station,  
Nobles rear'd. He, with Ealh-hild,  
(Leal artificer of love!) in his first journey,  
Sought the home of the fierce king,  
East from Ongle—the home of Eormanric,  
Wrathful trechour!

### LAYAMON

*Flourished circa 1180*

LAYAMON, a priest of Ernesley-upon-Severn, translated Wace's *Brut d'Angleterre*—a Norman-French version of Geoffrey of Monmouth's history—into English verse. Wace's poem contains 15,300 lines, and these Layamon expanded into 32,250 lines. No



materials are to hand for a biographical sketch of the history of this early writer. Mr. Ellis supposes that Layamon finished his translation in 1180, and conceives our language to have been formed between that period and 1216. It is written in alliterative verse of the Old English character, mixed with rhyming couplets. 'With this poem, the *Historia Britonum*, or *Brut*, English literature takes its new start.' Layamon makes some notable additions to the story as told by Geoffrey of Monmouth and Maister Wace. Though he follows Wace very closely as a rule, his is but a loose translation. The following is a specimen of Layamon's verses :

And of alle than folke  
 The wuneden ther on folde,  
 Wes thisses landes folk  
 Leodene hendest itald :  
 And alswa the wimmen  
 Wunliche on heowen.

That is :

And of all the folk that dwelt on earth was this land's folk the handsomest (people told) ; and also the women handsome of hue.

Mr. Ellis regards the dialect of Layamon as an example of pure Saxon. Campbell, in his *Essay on English Poetry*, looks upon it as something intermediate between the old and new languages—'something,' to use his own beautiful simile, 'like the new insect stirring its wings before it has shaken off the aurelia state.'

The title of the 'English Ennius,' which was formerly applied to Robert of Gloucester, may now fairly be transferred to Layamon.

'The language of Layamon,' says Mr. Guest, 'may perhaps (at least, in substance) be considered as the dialect spoken in South Gloucestershire during the twelfth century. One of its most striking peculiarities is its *nunnation*, if we may be allowed to use a term already familiar to the scholar. Many words end in *n*, which are strangers to that letter, not only in the Anglo-Saxon, but in all the later dialects of our language ; and as this letter assists in the declension of nouns, and the conjugation of verbs, the *grammar* of this dialect becomes, to a singular degree, complicated and difficult.'



## ORM, AND THE ORMULUM

*Orm*, or *Ormin*, was an Augustinian monk who is supposed to have lived somewhere near the borders of Lincolnshire. He was author of the *Ormulum*, a very lengthy poem of which there remains only a 'fragment,' which contains about ten thousand lines! It is called the *Ormulum*, we are told, 'because that Orm it wrote.' It is dedicated to a brother monk named Walter. The only extant MS. of his work is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, but the Palæographical Society have printed a transcript in which they have preserved the author's peculiarities of spelling.

## FROM THE 'ORMULUM.'

Nu, brotherr Wallterr, brotherr min  
 Affterr the flæshess kinde;  
 Annd brotherr min i Crisstenndom  
 Thurrh fulluhht and thurrh trowwthe;  
 Annd brotherr min i Godess hus,  
 Yet o the thride wise,  
 Thurrh thatt witt hafenn takenn ba  
 An reyhellboc to follyhenn,  
 Unnderr kanunnkess had annd lif,  
 Swa summ Sannt Awwstin sette;  
 Icc hafe don swa summ thu badd,  
 Annd forthedd te thin wille,  
 Icc hafe wennd inntill Ennglissh  
 Goddspelless hallyhe lare,  
 Affterr thatt little witt tatt me  
 Min Drihhin hafeth lenedd.

## TRANSLATION.

Now, brother Walter, brother mine  
 After the flesh's kind;  
 And brother mine in Christendom  
 Through baptism and through truth;  
 And brother mine in God's house,  
 Yet on the third wise,  
 Through that we have taken both  
 One rule-book to follow,  
 Under a canonic's hood and life,  
 So as St. Austin set;  
 I have done so as thou badest,  
 And furthered thee thy will,  
 I have turned into English  
 The Gospel's holy lore,  
 After the little wit that to me  
 My Lord hath lent.

Orm professes to have collected together in his *Ormulum* 'nigh all the Gospels that are in the mass-book, through all the year, at mass,' and to have accompanied each 'Gospel' with an exposition of its meaning. This plan was suggested to him by his brother, who, like himself, appears to have been a Regular Canon.

## THOMAS THE RHYMER

*Flourished* 1280

THOMAS OF ERCILDOUN, or Thomas the Rhymer, was a minstrel whose name is 'great in traditional story.' He was the owner of an estate which he bequeathed to his son. He is supposed to have been the author of our first metrical romance. In the latest edition of his *Encyclopædia of English Literature* Mr. Chambers says: 'As is well known, the romance of *Sir Tristrem*



was attributed by its first editor, Sir Walter Scott, to Thomas Rymour of Ercildoune or Earlston in Berwick, and not without reason, since in the *Chronicle* of Robert Mannyng mention is made of it in connection with Ercildoune and a Thomas; and the reference, with its mention of the strange English in which the story is written, might well point, as has been supposed, to an earlier Scottish text of which the extant version is a southernized transcript. Unfortunately, a hundred years earlier, the German version by Gottfried of Strasburg had also ascribed the authorship of the plot to a Thomas, and this Thomas could not possibly be Thomas of Ercildoune. It is possible, of course, that the Thomas mentioned in the German version and Thomas of Ercildoune both handled the story; but it is possible also that the fame of the prophecies of the Scottish Thomas led to the work of his unknown namesake being ascribed to him, and in the absence of any other Scottish work of this kind until many years later, this second theory seems the more credible of the two.' The story of Sir Tristrem was familiar to poetical antiquaries, being one of the ancient British legends taken up by the Norman minstrels.

Glad a man was he  
 The turnament dede crie,  
 That maidens might him se  
 And over the walles to lye;  
 Thai asked who was fre  
 To win the maistrie;  
 Thai seyde that best was he  
 The child of Ermonie  
 In Tour:  
 Forthi chosen was he  
 To maiden Blanche Flour.

## ROBERT OF GLOUCESTER

*Circa 1297*

THE metrical *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester, from the legendary age of Brutus to the end of the reign of Henry III., is amongst the most important literary works of this early period. It was printed from incorrect MSS. by Hearne in 1724 (2 vols., 8vo., Oxon.), and this edition was reprinted in London in 1810. The form of verse is the long line or couplet of fourteen syllables, divisible into eight and six. In the earlier part of the poem Geoffrey of Monmouth is closely followed. The latter part must have been written after A.D. 1297.



Few materials exist to throw any light on the personal history of Robert of Gloucester, but Selden has determined that he lived in the reign of Edward I. Other antiquaries have discovered that he was a monk of Gloucester, and Hearne supposes that he was sent to Oxford by the directors of the great abbey of Gloucester to take care of the youths whom they placed in that university. The same writer says that he seems to have occupied an old house on the west side of the Stockwell Street, on the site of which was afterwards built Worcester College, originally called Gloucester Hall. The most zealous efforts to discover the surname of the monk have failed. It is not to be found in either an ancient or modern hand in the Harleian manuscripts. Hearne prudently forbears to say much as to the merits of the chronicler as a poet, but he asserts that, of all books likely to prove useful in the study of the Saxon tongue, none is so valuable as the *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester. Camden speaks favourably of his poetry, and contends that the merit of his verse lies in the fact that it is so thoroughly English. Fuller, in his quaint and forcible way, says of him :

‘ They speak truly who term him a rhymers, whilst such speak courteously who call him a poet. Indeed, such is his language, that he is *dumb* in effect to the readers of this our age without an interpreter, and such a one will hardly be procured. Antiquaries, among whom Mr. Selden, more value him for his history than his poetry, his lines being neither strong nor smooth, but sometimes sharp.’

The following lines afford an example of the style of this poet :

Thus come lo ! Engeland into Normannes honde,  
 And the Normans ne couthe speke tho bote her owe speche,  
 And speke French as dude atom, and her chyldren dude al so teche ;  
 So that hey men of thys lond, that of her blod come,  
 Holdeth alle thulke speche that hii of hem nome.  
 Vor bote a man couthe French, me tolth of hym wel lute,  
 Ac lowe men holdeth to Englyss and to her kunde speche yute.  
 Ich wene ther ne be man in world contreyes none  
 That ne holdeth to her kunde speche, bote Englund one :  
 Ac wel me wot vor to conne bothe wel yt ys ;  
 Vor the more that a man con, the more worth he ys.

#### TRANSLATION.

Thus came lo ! England into the Normans' hand, and the Normans could not speak then but their own speech, and spoke French as they did at home, and their children did all so teach ; so that high men of this land, that of their blood come, hold all the same speech that they took of them. For



unless a man know French, men talk of him very little ; but low men hold to English and to their kindred speech yet. I ween there be not men in any country in the world that hold not to their kindred speech, but in England alone. But well men wot, it is well for to know both ; for the more that a man knows, the more worth he is.

To the thirteenth century belong three important romances—*Sir Tristrem*, *Havelock the Dane*, and *King Horn*—but their authorship is not known.

Dr. Craik sums up the leading facts in the history of English metrical romance in the following manner :

1. At least the first examples of it were translations from the French.

2. If any such were produced so early as before the close of the twelfth century (of which we have no evidence), they were probably designed for the entertainment of the mere commonalty, to whom alone the French language was unknown.

3. In the thirteenth century were composed the earliest of those we now possess in their original form.

4. In the fourteenth century the English took the place of the French metrical romance with all classes. This was its brightest era.

5. In the fifteenth it was supplanted by another species of poetry, among the more educated classes, and had also to contend with another rival in the prose romance ; but, nevertheless, it still continued to be produced, although in less quantity and of an inferior fabric.

6. It did not altogether cease to be read and written until after the commencement of the sixteenth century.

7. From that time the taste for this earliest form of our poetical literature lay asleep, until, after the lapse of three hundred years, it was re-awakened in this century by Scott.

### ROBERT MANNYNG

*Flourished circa 1350*

EVIDENTLY an imitation of the *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester is that of Robert Mannyng, or Robert de Brunne, as he is also called. It is on a larger scale than the original, and the last considerable work of the Old English period. It is 'even less valuable, being mainly founded on Wace's version of Geoffrey



of Monmouth, and, save in the pleasant preface on the need of books in the English language, is of no originality, literary or historical.' It consists of two parts. The first, translated from the *Brut* of Wace, reaches to the death of Cadwallader. The second, which is based upon the Anglo-Norman of Peter de Langtoft, extends to the death of Edward I. (A.D. 1307). Only the second part has been published, with the editions of Robert of Gloucester. The language is 'a step nearer to modern English, the most important changes being the use of *s* for *th* in the third person singular, and the introduction of nearly the present forms of the feminine personal pronoun. The first part is in the eight-syllable line of Wace; the second is partly in the same metre, and partly in the Alexandrine, the heroic measure of the age.'

A passage occurs in one of Mannyng's poems, in which he refers to his early education, and, according to the interpretation of Mr. Ellis, it may be decided therefrom that he was a native of Malton, and flourished as late as the reign of Edward III. The lines are these :

In the Third Edward's time was I,  
When I wrote all this story.  
In the house of Sixille I was a throwe,  
Dan Robert of Malton that ye know  
Did it write for fellows' sake,  
When thai willed solace make.

He appears to have occupied a somewhat conspicuous position amongst the writers of his age, and Hearne observes that it is probable he assumed the appellation of De Brunne, choosing to let his proper surname fall into oblivion, like Robert of Gloucester. Warton has observed that De Brunne had little more poetry in him than Robert of Gloucester, but has added, as some apology for him, that he has acquainted his readers that he avoided high description and the usual phraseology of the minstrels and harpers of his day. His lines on the subject give a good idea of the language of the period :

I mad noght for no disours,  
Ne for seggers, no harpeurs,  
But for the luf of symple men,  
That strange Inglis cannot ken.  
For many it ere that strange Inglis  
In ryme wate never what it is.  
I made it not for to be praysed,  
Bot at the lewed men were aysed.



This author also translated a treatise written in French by the celebrated Grossthead, Bishop of Lincoln,<sup>1</sup> entitled *Le Manuel de Pechiez*, or *Manual of Sins*, a work which throws some strange light on the religious notions of the age, and on the methods by which they were disseminated. Another work of his was a translation of the treatise of Cardinal Bonaventura, entitled *Medytaciuns of the Soper of our Lord Jhesu*.

### RICHARD ROLLE

*Died 1349*

ABOUT the same time as Robert Mannyng there flourished also a poet named Richard Rolle. He was a hermit of the Order of St. Augustine and a Doctor of Divinity, who lived a solitary life near the Convent of Hampole in the neighbourhood of Doncaster. He composed metrical paraphrases of parts of Holy Scripture, and was also the author of a moral poem called *The Pricke of Conscience*. It is not certain whether he composed the latter in English. As it exists now, it has characteristics which suggest the idea that it is a translation from a Latin original, though in the first instance it was written by him. 'One agreeable passage of this dull work' is given here :

#### WHAT IS IN HEAVEN.

Ther is lyf without ony deth,  
 And ther is youthe without ony elde ;  
 And ther is alle manner welthe to welde ;  
 And ther is rest without ony travaille ;  
 And ther is pees without ony strife,  
 And ther is alle manner lykinge of lyf :—  
 And ther is bright somer ever to se,  
 And there is nevere wynter in that countrie :—  
 And ther is more worshipe and honour,  
 Than evere hade kyng other emperour.

And ther is grete melodie of aungeles songe,  
 And ther is preysing hem amonge.  
 And ther is alle manner frendshipe that may be,  
 And ther is evere perfect love and charite ;  
 And ther is wisdom without folye,  
 And ther is honeste without vileneye.  
 Al these a man may joyes of hevene call :  
 Ac yutte the most soveryn joye of alle  
 Is the sighte of Goddes bright face,  
 In wham resteth alle mannere grace.

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<sup>1</sup> William de Waddington.—CHAMBERS.



## LAWRENCE MINOT

*Flourished circa 1352*

LAWRENCE MINOT, who flourished in the reign of King Edward III., is described by Dr. Craik as 'perhaps the earliest writer of English verse subsequent to the Conquest who deserves the name of a poet.' We have from him ten poems written in commemoration of the military successes of Edward. The whole were published by Ritson in 1796 under the title of *Poems written in the Year 1352*, by Lawrence Minot, with *Introductory Dissertations on the Scottish Wars of Edward III., on his claim to the throne of France, and Notes and Glossary*. A reprint of this volume appeared in 1825. The subjects of the poems are: the *Battle of Halidon Hill* (1333), the *Battle of Bannockburn* (1314), *Edward's first invasion of France* (1339), the *Sea-fight in the Zuin* (1340), the *Siege of Tournay* (1340), the *Landing of Edward at La Hogue* (1346), the *Siege of Calais* (1346), the *Battle of Neville's Cross* (1346), the *Sea-fight with the Spaniards off Winchelsea* (1350), and the *Taking of the Guisnes* (1352). The poems are written in a truly martial strain. In support of his statement that Minot was the first writer after the Conquest to deserve the name of poet, Dr. Craik says of his verses:

'They are remarkable, if not for any poetical qualities of a high order, yet for a precision and selectness, as well as a force, of expression, previously, so far as is known, unexampled in English verse. There is a true martial tone and spirit too in them, which reminds us of the best of our old heroic ballads, while it is better sustained, and accompanied with more refinement of style, than it usually is in these popular and anonymous compositions.'

The language of these poems is border dialect, which is near akin to the Scotch. It is quite intelligible, and rhyme is regularly employed in the composition, as is also alliteration. The animated double triplet, with which we meet in the poems of Sir Walter Scott, is to be found in the writings of Minot.

His works were comparatively unknown until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when they were published by Ritson, who praised them for the ease, variety, and harmony of the versification. They have since been edited by J. Hall, in 1897.



The following is an example of his dialect, which is Northumbrian :

God that schope [formed] both se and sand  
 Save Edward, King of England,  
 Both body, saul, and life,  
 And grante him joy withowten strife !  
 For mani men to him er wroth,  
 In Fraunce and in Flandres both ;  
 For he defendes fast his right,  
 And tharto Jhesu grante him might !

## WILLIAM LANGLAND

*Flourished circa 1350*

### ‘THE VISION OF PIERS PLOUGHMAN’

WE have numerous manuscripts of the *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, the full Latin title of which is, *Visio Willielmi de Petro Ploughman*, or, *The Vision of William concerning Peter the Ploughman*. It is the earliest metrical composition which we may still read with much pleasure. Its merit is very considerable. Mr. Thomas Wright, who was the last to reissue it, in 1842, divides the long line of previous editions into two, thus making the poem consist of 14,696 verses, under twenty sections, called *Passus*. Each of these sections relates a separate vision, an arrangement which lends itself to the idea that it was originally put forth as a collection of shorter poems rather than as one connected whole. As regards its subject the work bears a resemblance to Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, the style being allegorical, and descriptions being given of the manifold temptations and difficulties which beset the path which mortals have to tread in their daily life. It is freely sprinkled throughout with sharp attacks upon the Church and its ministers, though it is generally believed that the author himself was a priest or a monk. Notwithstanding this fact, such attacks evidently gave him a peculiar pleasure, for, though he from time to time reverts to other topics, he invariably returns to his favourite one, each time with renewed vigour and increased venom. Though it was written long before either Puritanism or Protestantism had any existence under those names, the tone of the work is of such a Protestant character that at the time of the Reformation three editions of it were printed in one year.



The author must undoubtedly be classed as the greatest of the minor contemporaries of Chaucer. Though the plan of the work is decidedly confused, it possesses in many passages extraordinary poetical vigour.

The resemblance to the *Pilgrim's Progress* before mentioned is thus summed up by Spalding : ' The likeness lies much deeper than in the naming of such persons as Do-well, Do-better, and Do-best, by which the parallel is most obviously suggested. Some of the allegories are whimsically ingenious, and are worth notice as specimens of a kind of invention appearing everywhere in the poetry of the Middle Ages. The Lady Anima who represents the Soul of Man, is placed by Kind, that is Nature, in a castle called Caro, or the Flesh ; and the charge of it is committed to the constable Sir In-wit, a wise knight, whose chief officers are five sons, See-well, Say-well, Hear-well, Work-well, and Go-well. One of the other figures is Reason, who preaches in the Church to the King and his knights, teaching that all the evils of the realm are because of sin ; and among the Vices, who are converted by the sermon, we see Proud-heart, who vows to wear hair-cloth ; Envy, lean, cowering, biting his lips, and wearing the sleeves of a friar's frock ; and Covetousness, a bony, beetle-browed, blear-eyed, ill-clothed caitiff. Mercy and Truth are two fair maidens ; and the Diseases, the foragers of Nature, are sent out from the planets by the command of Conscience, before whom Old Age bears a banner, while Death in his chariot rides after him. Conscience is besieged by Antichrist, who, with his standard-bearer Pride, is most kindly received by a fraternity of monks, ringing their convent-bells, and marching out in procession to greet their master.'

The poem was twice recast by its author, with the result that there are three separate versions of it. The A text, which is the shortest, is of the year 1362. The B text, which is the best, is of the year 1377. The C text may be reckoned as of the year 1380.

The poem is without rhyme, being indeed a revival of the alliterative style of verse which was still found in some of the romances of the time. Dr. Percy shows, in his *Reliques*, that it was probably borrowed from the Icelandic Scalds.

The old alliterative metre of these latter may be described



as a verse, with a strong cæsura in the middle, containing, in the first half, two accented words beginning with the same letter ; which letter is also the initial of the accented syllable in the second half of the measure. In *Piers Ploughman* the alliteration falls upon three accented syllables in each couplet—that is, on both those of the first line and on the first in the second line (though sometimes it falls upon the second).

Little is known of the author of this remarkable work, but it is generally believed that his name was either Robert or William Langland. Dr. Collier says he was born in Shropshire about 1300, and was a secular priest and a Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, but other historians will not be positive even as to his name, considering that, in common with other particulars concerning him, to be no more than a matter of conjecture. For instance, Monsieur Jusserand, the author of a charming essay entitled *Piers Ploughman: a Contribution to the History of English Mysticism*, observes with some humour : ‘ Our excuse for putting “ la charrue avant les bœufs ” must be that there are no “ bœufs.” ’ This is his apology for describing the poem, as we have endeavoured to do, before mentioning its author. As regards anything which may be called evidence we are limited to some scanty notes on a manuscript or two. On the Ashburnham MS. is written ‘ Robert or William Langland made Pers Plowman.’ On a manuscript which is preserved in Dublin this inscription is traceable : ‘ Memorandum : Quod Stacy de Rokayle pater Willielmi de Langland, qui Stacius fuit generosus et moriebatur in Sheptone under Whicwode, tenens domini Le Spenser in comitatu Oxon ; qui predictus Willielmus fecit librum qui vocatur Perys Ploughman.’ The characters are said to belong to the fifteenth century. No contemporary writer mentions the name of Robert or William Langland, but some historians have dwelt upon the internal evidence which they discern in a single line of the poem itself :

I have lived in *londe*, quoth I ; my name is *long Wille*.

This, they say, if read backwards, suggests the name Wille Longlonde—a form of anagram by no means uncommon. In spite of the paucity and uncertainty of the details which are available, Professor Skeat and Monsieur Jusserand have built



up thereupon two interesting biographies of this remarkable and mysterious poet.

The author of *Piers Ploughman* had experience of that 'sincerest form of flattery,' imitation, and in his day he enjoyed as much popularity as did Bunyan in a later age. A poem, entitled *The Creed of Piers Ploughman*, written some twenty or thirty years after the *Vision*, is sometimes ascribed to the pen of Langland, but it is more likely to be the work of a contemporary whose identity has not been revealed. The only other poem which Langland is generally accredited with is one which is preserved in the Cambridge University Library, written on the last page of a MS. of *Piers Ploughman*. It is called *A Poem on the Deposition of Richard II.* It is a short poem and ends abruptly in the middle of a sentence, a fact which has led some critics to consider it unfinished. But it is more likely that it was left so designedly, 'because the news of the murder of the King formed a tragic but logical peroration.' The poem is generally called *Richard the Redeless*, from its opening lines.

The *Vision of Piers Ploughman* begins as follows :

In a summer season,  
When soft was the sun,  
I shoop me into shrouds<sup>1</sup>  
As I a sheep<sup>2</sup> were :  
In habit as an hermit  
Unholy of werkes,  
Went wide in this world,  
Wonders to hear ;  
Ac on a May morwening  
On Malvern hills  
Me befel a ferly,<sup>3</sup>  
Of fairy me thought.  
I was weary for-wandered,  
And went me to rest  
Under a brood bank,  
By a burns side ;  
And as I lay and leaned,  
And looked on the waters,  
I slombered into a sleeping,  
It swayed so murly.<sup>4</sup>  
Then gan I meten  
A marvellous sweven<sup>5</sup>

That I was in a wilderness,  
Wist I never where ;  
And, as I beheld into the east  
On high to the sun,  
I seigh a tower on a toft  
Frieliche ymaked,<sup>6</sup>  
A deep dale beneath,  
A donjon therein,  
With deep ditches and darke,  
And dreadful of sight.  
A fair field full of folk  
Found I there between,  
Of all manner of men.  
The mean and the rich,  
Werking and wandering  
As the world asketh.  
Some putten hem to the plough,  
Playden full seld,<sup>7</sup>  
In setting and sowing  
Swonken<sup>8</sup> full hard,  
And wonnen that wasters<sup>9</sup>  
With gluttony destroyeth.

<sup>1</sup> I put myself into clothes.

<sup>4</sup> Sounded so pleasant.

<sup>7</sup> Played full seldom.

<sup>2</sup> Shepherd.

<sup>5</sup> Dream.

<sup>8</sup> Laboured.

<sup>3</sup> Wonder.

<sup>6</sup> Handsomely built.

<sup>9</sup> Won that which wasters with gluttony destroy.



## JOHN GOWER

*Circa 1327-1408*

A REMARKABLE poet of the Chaucerian period was John Gower, who may be described as the most interesting of the contemporaries of the Father of English poetry. The exact date of his birth is not known, but it is probable he was born about the year 1327. He was called 'Moral Gower' by Chaucer, and 'Ancient Gower' by Shakespeare. Though the available details of his history are both scanty and uncertain, it is known that his family was a noble one, and the name is now borne by one of the most illustrious families in England. He was a friend of Chaucer, who may be said to have admired both the poet and his writings, inasmuch as he was not above borrowing an idea from him now and then. Gower was a very scholarly man, and wrote in Latin, French, and English. He was educated at Merton College, Oxford. He is said to have been a kinsman of Sir Robert Gower, whose Manor of Kentwell, in Suffolk, he inherited. He has been identified by some writers with Sir John Gower, a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, and by others with a clerk of the same name who was Rector of Great Braxted, in Essex. But neither of these suppositions can bear the test of investigation. A modern writer, Mr. G. C. Macaulay, says, in his *Complete Works of John Gower* :

'There is nothing in Gower's writings to suggest the idea that he was an ecclesiastic. He distinctly calls himself a layman in the *Mirour de l'Omme*. The statement of Leland that he practised as a lawyer seems rather improbable, in view of the way in which he here (*Speculum Meditantis*) speaks of lawyers and their profession. Of all the secular estates that of the law seems to him to be the worst, and he condemns both advocates and judges in a more unqualified manner than the members of any other calling. Again, the way in which he speaks of physicians seems almost equally to exclude him from the profession of medicine. Of all the various ranks of society which he reviews, that of which he speaks with most respect is the estate of Merchants. . . . He speaks of "our City," and has strong feelings about the interests of the city of London. At the same time there is no definite evidence that Gower was a



merchant. His references to the dearness of labour and the unreasonable demands of the labourer are what we might expect from a man who had property in land ; but again we have no sufficient evidence that Gower was a landowner in the ordinary sense of the word. . . . Though a thorough believer in the principle of gradation in human society, he constantly emphasizes the equality of all men before God, and refuses absolutely to admit the accident of birth as constituting any claim to "gentlesce." He has a just abhorrence of war. . . . He is a citizen of the world no doubt, but an Englishman first, and he cares intensely for the prosperity of his native land. Even when he writes in French it is for England's sake—

O gentile Engleterre, à toi j'escrits.

He was a man of fairly wide general reading, and thoroughly familiar with certain particular books, especially the Bible, all the works of Ovid, and the writings of Peter de Riga.'

Gower's greatest work is the *Confessio Amantis*, or *Confession of a Lover*, written in the octosyllabic romance metre. It is a curious epic, with a very romantic plot. The lover betakes himself to his Father Confessor, a priest of the temple of Venus. The advice which the priest gives him is garnished with moral tales taken from the repertories of the Middle Ages, to which are added a host of moral, ethical, and metaphysical musings, and some lectures on chemistry. The philosophy of Aristotle is also touched upon. At last, when the heart of the lover has been probed to the utmost, he turns out to be too old to care. The work was written in English.

This poem, which is almost unanimously accounted dull and tedious, pursues its monotonous course through more than thirty thousand verses. 'The faults are general tediousness, and a strong tendency to feebleness,' says Mr. Spalding, who, however, admits that the language is smooth and easy, and that there is not a little that is exceedingly agreeable in description. Mr. Ellis declares that so long as Moral Gower keeps to his morality he is impressive, wise, and sometimes almost sublime, adding that his narrative is often quite 'petrifying.'

The rising of Wat Tyler in 1381 was the occasion of Gower's poem *Vox Clamantis*, which was written in Latin distichs. An excellent edition of this work was printed by the Rev. H. O. Coxe



for the Roxburghe Club in 1850. The first book describes the rising of Wat Tyler in an allegorical disguise. The second has a long discourse on Fatalism. The third points out how all orders of society must suffer punishment for their misdeeds. The fourth is dedicated to the cloistered clergy and friars. The fifth is addressed to the military. The sixth contains an attack on the lawyers, and the seventh sums up the moral of the whole work, represented in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, as interpreted by the prophet Daniel. There are also some minor Latin poems, in leonine hexameters, amongst these being one addressed to King Henry IV., in which the poet bewails his blindness.

The *Speculum Meditantis*, or *Speculum Hominis*, or *Mirour de l'Omme*, as it is variously called, was written in French. It was entirely lost until 1895, when it was rediscovered. It now forms the first volume of Mr. Macaulay's complete edition of the poet's works, which is published by the Clarendon Press. It is a poem containing nearly thirty thousand lines 'of passable verse,' in which a classification of the virtues and vices leads up to a survey of modern society, and this leads in turn to a biographical sketch of the Blessed Virgin Mary, by whose instrumentality society was to be reformed. Some verses addressed to Henry IV., after his accession, prove that Gower continued to write in French to the end of his life. He was buried, according to his own directions, in St. Mary Overy's, now the Collegiate Church of St. Saviour, Southwark.

'In the course of nearly five centuries the tomb has undergone many changes, and the present colouring and inscription are not original. What we have now is a canopy of three arches over an altar-tomb, on which lies an effigy of the poet, habited in a long, dark-coloured gown, with a standing cape and buttoned down to his feet, wearing a gold collar of SS, fastened in front with a device of a chained swan between two portcullises. His head rests on a pile of three folio volumes marked with the names of his three principal works, *Vox Clamantis*, *Speculum Meditantis*, *Confessio Amantis*. He has a rather round face with high cheek-bones, a moustache and a slightly-forked beard, hair long and curling upwards, and round his head a chaplet of four red roses at intervals upon a band, with the words "Merci ihf" (repeated) in the intervals between the roses; the hands



are put together and raised in prayer ; at the feet there is a lion or mastiff lying. . . . Berthelette (1532) gives an interesting account of the tomb : " John Gower prepared for his bones a resting-place in the monastery of St. Mary Overes, where somewhat after the old fashion he lieth right sumptuously buried, with a garland on his head in token that he in his life days flourished freshly in literature and science. And the same monument, in remembrance of him erected, is on the North side of the foresaid church, in the chapel of St. John, where he hath of his own foundation a mass daily sung : and moreover he hath an obit yearly done for him within the same church on the Friday after the feast of the blessed pope St. Gregory. Beside on the wall, whereas he lieth, there be painted three virgins"—Charitie, Mercye, and Pite. " And thereby hangeth a table, wherein appeareth that who so ever prayeth for the soul of John Gower, he shall, so oft as he so doth, have a thousand and five hundred days of pardon." About 1600 Stow notes that the virgins were all " washed out and the image defaced by cutting off the nose and striking off the hands." "

I thenkè make  
A bokè for Englonde sake,  
The yere sixtenthe of King Richard ;  
What shall befallè here-afterward,  
God wote, for nowe upon this side  
Men seen the worlde on every side  
In sondry wisè so diversed  
That it wel nigh stant all reversed.

## MINOR POETS BEFORE CHAUCER

*Aldhelm* (circa 656-709) was the most distinguished pupil of Adrian, and founder of the abbey of Malmesbury. He wrote, in hexameters, *De Laude Virginitatis* and a poem on *The Seven Cardinal Virtues*. 'His poetry,' says Mr. Shaw, 'is turgid and full of extravagant conceits.' He was a native of Sherborne, of which he eventually became Bishop.

*Bæda* (672-735), or the Venerable Bede, was 'the master of the time' in which he lived, and 'a perfect type of the outward



repose and intellectual activity of monastic life in its best aspect.' He was the author of forty-five works, theological, scientific, grammatical, and historical. As a poet he does not claim much of our attention, being merely the author of 'some correct but lifeless Latin poems,' of which that dedicated to the history of the great men of the school of York is the best.

*Alcuin* (circa 735-804) was a native of York, who was placed in a convent in his infancy, and subsequently trained in the school of Archbishop Egbert. He was a prolific writer in prose, and also fertile in the composition of Latin verse. His *Elegy on the Destruction of Lindisfarne by the Danes* is accounted his best work.

*Alfred the Great* (849-901), 'whose character was even greater than his renown as a warrior, ruler, and law-giver, was also a king in English literature.' He was a lover of poetry rather than a poet, and is chiefly to be remembered as a translator of historical works, such as those of Orosius and Bede, Boëthius, and St. Augustine. His poetical works were not numerous. The ease with which he remembered, and the diligence with which he collected, the songs sung by the wandering gleemen would furnish an excuse for including his name in a history of poetry, but he is chiefly remembered in histories of English literature as the 'Father of English prose.'

*Walter Mapes*, Archdeacon of Oxford, was a prolific writer in prose and poetry. He wrote poems in Latin, Anglo-Norman, and Leonine verse. He flourished in the reign of Henry II. His chief subject was the legend of Arthur. He wrote the *Confession of Goliath*, a satire levelled at the clergy and the Church.

*Maister Wace* (died after 1171), the earliest Anglo-Norman translator, was a native of Jersey. About the year 1160 he rendered into verse the history of Geoffrey of Monmouth under the title of *Brut d'Angleterre*. His version, in turn, became the source of the *Brut* of Layamon. He also wrote, in French, the *Roman du Rou* (Romance of Rollo). Wace was made a Canon of Bayeux by Henry II.

*Joseph of Exeter*, or Josephus Iscanus (died circa 1210), was the author of a Latin poem called *De Bello Trojano*, which is one of



the last and best examples of the regular Latin poetry. It was so popular that it was used in schools. He also wrote a Latin poem called *Antiocheis*, the subject of which was Richard's expedition to Palestine. It is now almost entirely lost.

*Stephen Langton* (d. 1228) was a Cardinal and a writer of French verse. There is a manuscript sermon of his in the British Museum which contains a pretty song entitled *La belle Aliz*. The fair Alice has been gathering flowers in a garden, and the author weaves from this a garland of praise for the Blessed Virgin. He was Archbishop of Canterbury in the reign of John.

*Geoffrey de Vinsauf* (circa 1198), noted as a 'chronicler,' was the author of a regular poem, entitled *De Novâ Poetriâ*, which he addressed to Pope Innocent III. It is a work of 'great merit, containing interesting allusions to contemporary history.' Vinsauf wrote metrical chronicles in both French and Latin.

*Canute* (1017-1036), the Danish Sovereign, is said to have composed a song on hearing the singing of the monks in Ely Cathedral as he rowed past in a boat on the river. Of this song one verse has been preserved by the monk of Ely, who wrote in the year 1166, or thereabouts. Even after the lapse of a century and a half it continued to enjoy much popularity. Mr. Chambers says: 'The language is still so intelligible that we may suspect the monk of having slightly modernized it in accordance with the English of the middle of the twelfth century.'

#### FRAGMENT OF A BALLAD COMPOSED BY CANUTE.

Merie sungen the muneches binnen Ely,  
That Cnut Ching rew thereby;  
Roweth, cnihtes, nær the lant,  
And here we thes muneches sæng.

#### TRANSLATION.

Merrily sung the monks within Ely,  
(When) that King Canute rowed thereby;  
Row, knights, near the land,  
And hear we these monks' song.

*Nigel Wircker*, a monk of Canterbury, was the author of *The Mirror of Fools*, which is a satire, and the most amusing of all our earlier classical poems. The hero of the tale is Brunellus,



ambitious to a degree, with a craving for distinction, but, withal, an ass. He studies at the University of Paris, and enters all the monastic orders in turn. Disappointed with the monks, he essays to establish a new order on his own account. Discovered by his old master, he is compelled to resume his natural station, and close his life in carrying panniers.

*Michael of Kildare* (1300) was the first Irishman who wrote verses in English.

*Richard the First, Cœur de Lion* (1157-1199) was a king who 'deemed it a gentlemanly accomplishment to sing as well as act the deeds of chivalry.' He cultivated and patronized the style of the *Troubadours*.

*Adam Davie* (1307-1327) is the only English poet named in connection with the reign of Edward II. Chambers says that he was Marshal of Stratford-le-Bow, near London, that he was a voluminous versifier, and wrote *Visions, The Battle of Jerusalem*, etc.

*Nicholas de Guildford* is said to have been the author of an original poem entitled *The Owl and the Nightingale* (1250-1260).

## MINOR POETS OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

### SCOTTISH POETS

*John Barbour*, Archdeacon of Aberdeen (*circa* 1316-1395), was the author of *Bruce*, a clever chronicle of the adventures of King Robert I., in 13,000 rhymed, octosyllabic lines. He was the greatest Scottish poet of his age, and takes high rank as the Father of Scottish Poetry.

*John de Fordun* (d. *circa* 1385) was a canon of Aberdeen, and the author of a chronicle which contains the legendary and historical annals of Scotland down to the death of King David I.

*Andrew Wyntoun* (*circa* 1350-1420) was Prior of Lochleven. He was the author of a metrical chronicle in nine books.



## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

*Circa 1328-1400*

GEOFFREY CHAUCER has been honoured by the historian with many high-sounding titles. Venerated by all as the Father of English Poetry, he has also been called the Father of English Literature and the Morning Star of Song. He was born in London, but the exact date of his birth has not as yet been ascertained with anything approaching certainty. Of the Metropolis he says, in *The Testament of Love* :

‘The city of London, that is to me so dear and sweet, in which I was forth grown ; and more kindly love have I to that place than to any other in earth, as every kindly creature hath full appetite to that place of his kindly ingendure.’

Accounts are by no means agreed as to his origin and rank. The name Chaucer is Norman, and on that account it is admitted that he may have been of knightly descent, but the fact is by no means conclusive as evidence. An interesting theory has lately been propounded that the name, which is found in many different spellings, is the same as *Chaufecire*, or Chaff-wax—*i.e.*, an officer who was employed to prepare the large wax seals for official documents. But the more ancient and more likely derivation is from *chaussure*, or shoes. In the translation of the Gospel of St. Mark by Richard of Hampole, the hermit, the verse ‘There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose’ is written thus: ‘A stalworther man than I schal come efter me, of whome I am not worthi downfallande, or knelande, to louse the thwonge of his *Chawcers*.’ The name, at all events, was very common in London, and in the eastern counties. The poet’s father and



grandfather both lived in London, besides possessing a small property at Ipswich. Robert Chaucer, the poet's grandfather, was a collector of customs on wine. John Chaucer, father of Geoffrey, was a vintner whose place of business was in Thames Street, London, and who went abroad in 1338 on the King's service, returning in or before 1348 to assume the office of deputy to the King's butler at Southampton.

Geoffrey was born, it is supposed, in 1328, or somewhat later, but the first definite mention of him is in April, 1357, 'when, as fragments of her household accounts show, a pair of red and black breeches, a short cloak, and shoes were provided for him as one of the servants of the Lady Elizabeth, wife of Lionel, Duke of Clarence. An entry of another payment to him shows that Chaucer passed the winter of 1357-1358 at her seat at Hatfield, in Yorkshire, where his future patron, John of Gaunt, was a visitor.'

The future poet is said to have travelled a good deal while yet a youth, and it has been stated that he afterwards studied law at the Inner Temple. The two Universities of Oxford and Cambridge have laid claim to him as a student within their walls. With regard to these suppositions, the following words of Dr. Collier are apt and interesting :

'The accounts of his early life are very uncertain. He calls himself a Londoner; and an inscription on his tomb, which signified that he died in 1400 at the age of seventy-two, seems to fix his birth in the year 1328. The words "Philogenet, of Cambridge, Clerk," which occur in one of his earliest works in reference to himself, have caused it to be inferred that he was educated at Cambridge. But Warton and others claim him as an Oxford man too, and, if he studied there, it is more than probable that he sat at the feet of Wycliffe, and imbibed the doctrines of the great reformer. An entry in some old register of the Inns of Court is said to state that "Geffrey Chaucer was fined five shillings for beating a Franciscan friar in Fleet Street," which ebullition of young blood is the only recorded event of his supposed law-studies at the Inner Temple.'

With Chaucer 'a fresh beginning' is made in English literature. 'He disregarded altogether the old English tradition, and

<sup>1</sup> Speght gives this story on the evidence of a Mr. Buckley, who professed to have seen the entry in the Temple records.



even the work written at an earlier period under French influence. For miracle-plays and romances he had a sovereign contempt, and, for any influence which they exerted on him, the writings of his fellow-countrymen, from Cædmon to Langland, might never have existed. His masters in his art were the Frenchmen, Guillaume Lorris, Jean de Meung, Deguilleville, Machault ; the Latins, Ovid, Virgil, and Statius ; above all, the Italians, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio.' He is distinguished, to begin with, as the first notable English poet who was born in the Metropolis, the first who was a layman, and the first who had any connection with the Court.

Chaucer was a man of the world, a student, a soldier, and a courtier. He was employed in affairs of delicacy and importance. He was acquainted with the great and warlike reign of Edward III., and versed in the history of the subsequent troubles and disasters. His poetical genius was not fully developed until he was well advanced in years. Indeed, it was not until he was sixty years of age that he produced the perennial work by which he is best known—the *Canterbury Tales*—' simple and varied as nature itself, imbued with the results of varied experience and close observation, and coloured with the genial lights of a happy temperament, that had looked on the world without austerity, and had passed through its changing scenes without losing the freshness and vivacity of youthful feeling and imagination.'

Chaucer accompanied the army with which Edward III. invaded France, and was taken prisoner at the siege of Retters about the year 1359. He was at this time honoured with the patronage and friendship of John of Gaunt, whose nuptials (with Blanche, heiress of Lancaster) he commemorates in his poem of *The Dream*. The poet and John of Gaunt subsequently became connected by marriage. Chaucer married Philippa Pyckard, or De Rouet, daughter of a knight of Hainault, and a Maid of Honour to the Queen, and Gaunt married her sister Catherine, widow of Sir John Swinford. In 1367 the poet was the recipient of a grant of twenty marks (£200) from the Crown, and in 1372 he was appointed joint envoy on a mission to the Duke of Genoa.

It is supposed that he made about this time a tour through the North of Italy, visiting Petrarca at Padua on his way. This is



inferred from the following passage in the *Canterbury Tales*, the clerk of Oxford saying : -

Learned at Padua of a worthy clerk—  
Francis Petrarch, the laureat poet,  
Hight this clerk, whose rhetoric sweet  
Enlumined all Italy of poetry.

Edward III. subsequently appointed Chaucer Comptroller of the Customs of wine and wool in the port of London. For this office he was endowed with a perquisite of a pitcher of wine daily from the royal dinner-table, which was commuted after a while into a pension of twenty marks. He is further supposed to have been endowed with a house near the royal manor at Woodstock, where, it is thought from his description of it in *The Dream*, he lived in great luxury. The following passage from that poem is a reference to the picturesque scenery of Woodstock Park :

And right anon as I the day espied,  
No longer would I in my bed abide,  
I went forth myself alone and boldely,  
And held the way down by a brook side  
Till I came to a land of white and green,  
So fair a one had I never in been.  
The ground was green y-powdered with daisy,  
The flowers and the groves alike high,  
All green and white was nothing else seen.

Blenheim now stands on the site of the royal manor of Woodstock, but the spot which is here described may still be visited by the poet's admirers.

'The opening of the reign of Richard II.,' says Mr. Chambers, 'was unpropitious to Chaucer. He became involved in the civil and religious troubles of the times, and joined with the party of John of Northampton, who was attached to the doctrines of Wickliffe, in resisting the measures of the Court. The poet fled to Hainault (the country of his wife's relations), and afterwards to Holland. He ventured to return in 1386, but was thrown into the Tower, and deprived of his Comptrollership. In May, 1388, he obtained leave to dispose of his two patents of twenty marks each—a measure prompted, no doubt, by necessity. He obtained his release by impeaching his previous associates, and confessing to his misdemeanours, offering also to prove the truth of his information by entering the lists of combat with the accused parties. How far this action involved the character of the poet we cannot now ascertain. He has painted his sufferings and dis-



tress, the odium which he incurred, and his indignation at the bad conduct of his former confederates, in powerful and affecting language in his prose work *The Testament of Love*.<sup>1</sup>

Chaucer's wife died in 1387. It is questionable whether this event was a cause of great grief to him. He alludes to her in the *House of Fame*, but in such a way as to leave behind the impression that the lady in question was by no means of an angelic temper. In 1388 he went his famous and eventful Canterbury pilgrimage, apparently in no morose or melancholy mood. In 1389 he received the appointment of Clerk of the King's Works at Westminster, at a salary of two shillings per diem, and in the next year the further office of Clerk of the Works at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, was conferred upon him. These two appointments he lost in June and July, 1391, and in February, 1394, he received a pension of £20 a year from Richard II., to which was added also a tun of wine. His history for some years after this is clouded by obscurity, but it is supposed that he lived in retirement at Woodstock, engaged in the composition of his *Canterbury Tales*. A patent of protection was granted to him in 1398. In 1399 Henry IV. was proclaimed as King. The new monarch, who was the son of the poet's brother-in-law, John of Gaunt, and also of that Duchess Blanche whose beauty and death Chaucer had sung of in 1369, continued the pension above-mentioned, and added forty marks besides. Thomas Chaucer, the poet's son, was made Chief Butler and Speaker of the House of Commons, and the poet himself was granted a lease of tenement at Westminster at a rental of £2 13s. 4d. per annum. The date of this lease is December 24, 1399. In this abode Chaucer breathed his last on October 25, 1400. The house stood upon the site of Henry VII.'s Chapel in Westminster, and close to that spot the ashes of the Father of English Poetry were laid to rest, the first of the long line of illustrious writers of English verse who repose within that glorious fane.

The many portraits of Chaucer which are within the reach of the student depict a face which, in spite of the vicissitudes of fortune, suggest 'a heart unsoured by care.' Even in old age, when his locks hung in silver threads beneath his buttoned bonnet, a joyous spirit shone forth from his features. His lips were

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Shaw says *The Testament of Love* has been erroneously ascribed to Chaucer.



fringed by a small, fair, well-trimmed beard, and the general effect is pleasing. His ordinary dress is said to have consisted of red hose, horned shoes, and a loose frock of camlet, reaching to the knee, with wide sleeves fastened at the wrist.

Chaucer's are not merely the first poetical, but the earliest grammatical works in English, written at a period when there was no such thing as a grammar, or even a dictionary. The modern lexicographer shows, by his references to Chaucer, that his works *became* the grammar and dictionary of the language, from which Spenser, Shakespeare, and other subsequent writers must have largely drawn. They build their palaces on the foundation which Chaucer laid. He has been bracketed with Dante and Petrarca in what has been called the 'Triumvirate of the Mediæval Poets.' He was certainly our first humorist, as well as our first great poet. Cowper has been given the credit of completing that pure English style which Chaucer began.

The fame of Chaucer as a poet rests chiefly on his *Canterbury Tales*. The main idea of the work may have been borrowed from the *Decameron* of Boccaccio,<sup>1</sup> in which a company of people spending ten days in a country house near Florence tell one hundred tales after dinner. The plan adopted by Chaucer is as follows :

A party of thirty pilgrims assemble at the inn of the Tabard, in Southwark, on their way to the tomb of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. The motley gathering is composed of specimens of nearly every character then to be met with in the streets and homes of England. The host of the inn joins the party, and assumes the post of director. Each person is to tell two tales, one in going, and the other on returning. The reader, however, is only permitted to accompany them on a part of their journey, and to hear twenty-four of the stories. The poet did not live long enough to complete the work, and so the arrival at the shrine, the tales on the return, and the promised supper with which the adventure was to finish up, are left untold. We have, however, the tales of the Knight, the Miller, the Reeve, the Cook, the Man of Law, the Shipman, the Prioress, the poet himself (to whom

<sup>1</sup> Some eminent critics, notably Professor Lounsbury and Dr Skeat, are firm in the conviction that Chaucer had never read a line of the *Decameron*. Certainly no evidence of his having done so can be cited as proof. The work was not known to Petrarca, and, since that is true of Boccaccio's friend and correspondent, there is nothing very strange in the ignorance of an Englishman of letters who only spent a short time in Italy.



two tales are assigned), the Monk, the Nun's Priest, the Doctor, the Pardoner, the Wife of Bath, the Friar, the Sompnour, the Clerk of Oxford, the Merchant, the Squire (whose tale is unfinished), the Franklin, the second Nun, the Canon's Yeoman, the Manciple, and the Parson. As a series of pictures of middle-class life in England during the fourteenth century these tales could not be surpassed. The Prologue, which explains the occasion of the assemblage, and gives a description of the company, is in itself a poem of considerable magnitude, and of remarkable merit. In many of the tales themselves the diction rises to the highest flights of reflective, heroic, and religious poetry. The tales are all written in verse, with the exception of the Parson's and Chaucer's second story, the allegorical account of Melibœus and his wife Prudence. An immense variety of metrical forms occurs in the poetical narratives, from the regular heroic rhymed couplet down to the short, irregular, octosyllabic verse of the *Trouvère Gestours*. 'All these forms,' says Mr. Shaw, 'Chaucer handles with consummate ease and dexterity, and the nature of the versification will often assist us in tracing the sources from whence Chaucer derived or adapted his materials: whether from the fabliaux of the Provençal poets, the legends of the mediæval chroniclers, the *Gesta Romanorum*, or the early Italian writers, Dante, Petrarca, and Boccaccio.'

The large number of French words in the writings of Chaucer is easily accounted for by the fact that French was still spoken by many of the better-educated people of England during the poet's lifetime. Some of his words—such, for instance, as *aventüre*, *licóur*, and *coráge*—demand a French pronunciation.

The difficulty of reading and understanding the writings of Chaucer may be considerably lessened by observation of the following rules: (1) The final *e* in such words as *lové*, *hopé*, etc., is to be pronounced as a separate syllable. (2) The termination *ed* in verbs is invariably to be pronounced separately. The grammar belongs to a transition stage between the highly-inflected Anglo-Saxon grammar and that of modern English, which is almost devoid of inflections.

The tales may be divided into two classes—one pathetic, and the other humorous. Of the first class the best are the *Knight's*, the *Squire's*, the *Man of Law's*, the *Prioress's*, and the *Clerk of Oxford's*. The last-mentioned has been classed as the most



beautiful pathetic narrative in the whole field of literature. The best of the comic tales are the *Miller's*, the *Reeve's*, the *Sompnour's*, and those of the *Canon's Yeoman* and the *Nun's Priest*.

The earlier and minor works of Chaucer are chiefly translations from Italian, Latin, and French. The *Romaunt of the Rose* is an allegory, which goes to prove the truth of the old saying, 'The course of true love never did run smooth,' and is a richly descriptive piece of versifying. The *Court of Love* and *Troilus and Creseide* are supposed to have been written while the poet was still at college. The *Legende of Goode Women* gives us some incidents in the lives of Ariadne, Dido, Cleopatra, and other classical heroines. In the *House of Fame* the poet is borne in a dream to a beryl temple by a mighty eagle. The temple is built upon a rock of ice, and here, from a throne of carbuncle, the Goddess of Fame dispenses her favours.

Professor Ten Brink groups Chaucer's works into three periods, thus :

1. Up to 1372.—Copied the French, as in *Romaunt of the Rose*.
2. 1373 to 1384.—Influenced by the Italian Renaissance.
3. 1384 to 1400.—Individuality and originality of his own genius.

A powerful criticism of Chaucer's genius is given by Professor Craik in his *History of English Literature*. From it we quote the following far-reaching and expressive words :

'Chaucer is the Homer of his country, not only as having been the earliest of her poets (deserving to be so called), but also as being still one of her greatest. The names of Spenser, of Shakespeare, and of Milton are the only other names that can be placed on the same line with his. His poetry exhibits, in as remarkable a degree perhaps as any other in any language, an intermixture and combination of what are usually deemed the most opposite excellences. Great poet as he is, we might almost say of him that his genius has as much about it of the spirit of prose as of poetry, and that, if he had not sung so admirably as he has of flowery meadows, and summer skies, and gorgeous ceremonials, and high or tender passions, and the other themes over which the imagination best loves to pour her vivifying light, he would have won to himself the renown of a Montaigne or a Swift by the originality and penetrating sagacity of his observation on ordinary life, his insight into motives and character, the richness



and peculiarity of his humour, the sharp edge of his satire, and the propriety, flexibility, and exquisite expressiveness of his refined yet natural diction. Even like the varied visible creation around us, his poetry too has its earth, its sea, and its sky, and all the "sweet vicissitudes" of each. Here you have the clear-eyed observer of man as he is, catching "the manners living as they rise," and fixing them in pictures where not their minutest lineament is or ever can be lost : here he is the inspired dreamer, by whom earth and all its realities are forgotten, as his spirit soars and sings in the finer air and amid the diviner beauty of some far-off world of its own. Now the riotous verse rings loud with the turbulence of human merriment and laughter, casting from it, as it dashes on its way, flash after flash of all the forms of wit and comedy ; now it is the tranquilizing companionship of the sights and sounds of inanimate nature of which the poet's heart is full—the springing herbage, and the dewdrops on the leaf, and the rivulets glad beneath the morning ray and dancing to their own simple music. From mere narrative and playful humour up to the heights of imaginative and impassioned song, his genius has exercised itself in all styles of poetry, and won imperishable laurels in all.'

The *Canterbury Tales* were printed by Caxton in 1478 and 1483, and reprinted by Pynson and Wynkin de Worde. In 1526 Pynson printed most of Chaucer's works in a volume in three parts, but the first collected edition was that printed by Godfray in 1532, and edited by Thynne. In 1598 and 1602 editions were edited by Thomas Spaght, and Urry edited an issue in 1721. In 1775-78 an excellent edition was produced by Thomas Tyrwhitt, and the style of issue was still further improved upon by Thomas Wright's edition for the Percy Society in 1847, and Richard Morris's edition in Bell's Aldine Classics. These were both founded on the Harleian MS. 7,334. But no accurate text was possible until Dr. Furnivall founded the Chaucer Society in 1866, and printed parallel texts from all the best manuscripts available, including the Ellesmere, which is now acknowledged to be the best. The Chaucer Society has settled the true order of the *Canterbury Tales*, and established the sources of many of Chaucer's poems.

Attempts to 'modernize' the English of Chaucer with a view to making the poems more attractive to readers of average



education must, as a rule, be accounted failures. One editor says in his preface, by way of apology: 'In modernizing the fourteenth-century English, no liberties have been taken with the text that are not necessary to enable the ordinary reader to follow the poetry with ease and understanding. Sometimes, no doubt, the rhythm suffers. But when it is a question of sacrificing sound or sense, the former has gone by the board.' He discreetly adds: 'This edition is not for students of Chaucer. It will only make them wild and dispose them to homicide.'

If any apology be due for 'modernization,' it will perhaps be sufficient to point out that it is the fashion with editors of the works of Chaucer so to do. Mr. Clarke, in his work on *The Beauties of Chaucer*, makes an ample apology for following this fashion, in these forcible words: 'In the first place, for some centuries there was no orthography fixed—so little so, indeed, that I believe I am correct in stating that even Sir Walter Raleigh wrote his own name three several ways. But Chaucer gave himself considerable license with regard to orthography. He not merely altered the composition of words at the terminations of his lines that they might rhyme to the eye as well as to the ear, but he would even, upon occasion, give a different termination to them to make them rhyme to the ear in the first instance.' As an example of this, among others, line 1039 of the *Clerk's Tale* is cited, in which the personal pronoun *me* is altered into *mo*, to make it rhyme with *also*. Mr. Clarke goes so far as to contend that every edition of Chaucer varies not only with its predecessor in the spelling of certain words, but even with itself in the spelling of the same word.

It is hoped that the following selections, as well as the form in which they are presented, will be satisfactory and helpful even to 'students of Chaucer.'

### FROM THE 'CANTERBURY TALES'

#### THE PARSON

A good man there was of religion  
That was a pooré parsoun<sup>1</sup> of a town;  
But rich he was of holy thought and werk:  
He was also a learned man—a clerk<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In low Latin, *Persona*.

<sup>2</sup> A scholar. The clergy alone could read and write in the Dark Ages.



That Christés gospel truély would preach ;  
 His parishens devoutly would he teach.  
 Benign he was and wonder diligent,  
 And in adversity full patient :  
 And such he was yproved often sithes.  
 Full loth were him to cursen for his tythes ;  
 But rather would he given out of doubt,  
 Unto his pooré parishens about,  
 Of his off'ring and eke of his substance :  
 He could in little thing have suffisance.<sup>1</sup>  
 Wide was his parish—houses far asunder,  
 But he ne left nought for no rain ne thunder,  
 In sickness and in mischief to visite  
 The farthest in his parish much and lite,  
 Upon his feet, and in his hand a staff.  
 This noble ensample to his sheep he gaff,—  
 That first he wrought and afterward he taught ;  
 Out of the gospel he the wordés caught,  
 And this figure he added yet thereto,—  
 That if gold rusté, what should iron do ?  
 For if a priest be foul on whom we trust,  
 No wonder is a lewed<sup>2</sup> man to rust.  
 And shame it is, if that a priest take keep,  
 To see a smutted shepherd and clean sheep.  
 Wele ought a priest ensample for to give  
 By his cleannessé, how his sheep should live.

## THE KNIGHT AND THE SQUIRE

A knight there was, and that a worthy man,  
 That, fro the timé that he first began  
 To riden out, he lovéd chivalry,  
 Truth, and honòur, freedom, and courtesy.  
 Full worthy was he in his lordés war,  
 And thereto had he ridden, no man farre,  
 As well in Christendom as in Heathenesse,  
 And ever honoured for his worthiness.

At Alisandre<sup>3</sup> he was when it was won ;  
 Full oftentime he had the board begun  
 Aboven allé nations, in Prusse.  
 In Lettowe<sup>4</sup> had he reysed,<sup>5</sup> and in Russe,  
 No Christian man so oft of his degree.  
 In Gernade at the siege eke had he be  
 Of Algesir,<sup>6</sup> and ridden in Belmarie.<sup>7</sup>  
 At Leyés was he and at Satalie,  
 When they were won ; and in the Greaté Sea<sup>8</sup>  
 At many a noble army had he be.  
 At mortal battles had he been fifteen,  
 And foughten for our faith at Tramicene,  
 In listes thries and aye slain his foe.  
 This ilke<sup>9</sup> worthy Knight had been alsó

<sup>1</sup> Sufficiency.<sup>2</sup> Layman.<sup>3</sup> Alexandria was captured by Pierre de Lusignan, King of Cyprus, in 1365.<sup>4</sup> Lithuania.<sup>5</sup> Travelled.<sup>6</sup> Taken from the Moorish King of Grenada in 1344.<sup>7</sup> Supposed to be in Africa.<sup>8</sup> The Mediterranean.<sup>9</sup> Same.



Sometimé with the Lord of Palatie  
 Agen another heathen in Turkéy ;  
 And evermore he had a sovereign prise,  
 And, though<sup>1</sup> that he was worthy, he was wise ;  
 And of his port as meek as is a maid.  
 He never yet no villany ne said,  
 In all his life, unto no manner wight.  
 He was a very perfect gentle Knight.

\* \* \* \* \*

With him there was his son, a youngé Squire,  
 A lover and a lusty bachelor,  
 With lockés crull, as they were laid in press.  
 Of twenty year of age he was I guess.  
 Of his stature he was of even length ;  
 And he had been sometime in chevachie<sup>2</sup>  
 In Flanders, in Artois, and in Picardy,  
 And borne him well, as of so little space,  
 In hope to standen in his ladys grace.  
 Embroidered was he, as it were a mead  
 All full of freshé flowers white and red.  
 Singing he was or fluting all the day :  
 He was as fresh as is the month of May.  
 Short was his gown, with sleevés long and wide ;  
 Well could he sit on horse, and fair ride.  
 He couldé songés make, and well indite,  
 Joust, and eke dance, and well pourtray and write.  
 So hot he loved that still by nightertale<sup>3</sup>  
 He slept no more than doth the nightingale.  
 Courteous he was, lowly, and serviceable,  
 And carved before his father at the table.<sup>4</sup>

The above are taken from Mr. Scrymgeour's selections. The antique spelling is slightly modified.

#### THE CLERK OF OXFORD

A clerk ther was of Oxenforde also,  
 That unto logike hadde long ago.  
 As lene was his hors as is a rake,  
 And he was not right fat I undertake ;  
 But looked holwe, and thereto soberly.  
 Ful thredbare was his overest courtesy,  
 For he hadde geten him yet no benefice,  
 He was nought worldly to have an office.  
 For him was lever han, at his beddes hed,  
 Twenty bokes clothed in black or red,  
 Of Aristotle and his philosophie,  
 Than robes rich, or fidel, or sautrie :  
 But all be that he was a philosophe,  
 Yet had he but litel gold in cofre ;  
 But all that he might of his friendes hente,<sup>5</sup>  
 On bokes and on lerning he it spente ;  
 And besily gan for the soules praie  
 Of hem that gave him wherewith to scolaie.

<sup>1</sup> As well as.

<sup>3</sup> Night-time.

<sup>2</sup> Military service.

<sup>4</sup> One of the functions of a squire. <sup>5</sup> Obtain.



Of studie toke he most cure and hede.  
 Not a word spake he more than was nede ;  
 And that was said in forme and reverence,  
 And short and quike, and full of high sentence :  
 Souning in moral vertue was his speche ;  
 And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche.

## THE MILLER

The Miller was a stout carl for the nones,  
 Ful bigge he was of braun, and eke of bones ;  
 That proved wel ; for over all ther he came,  
 At wrastling he wold bere away the ram.  
 He was short-shuldered, brode, a thikke gnarre,<sup>1</sup>  
 That n'as no dore, that he n'olde heve of barre,  
 Or breke it at a renning with his hede.  
 His berd as any sowe or fox was rede,  
 And therto brode, as though it were a spade :  
 Upon the cop right of his nose he hade  
 A wert, and thereon stode a tufte of heres  
 Rede as the bristles of a sowes eres :  
 His nose-thirles black were and wide.  
 A swerd and bokeler bare he by his side.  
 His mouth as wide was as a forneis :  
 He was a jangler, and goliardeis.<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

A baggepipe wel coude he blowe and soune,  
 And therewithall he brought us out of tounne.

## ON THE DUPLICITY OF WOMEN

The world is full of variance  
 In everything, who taketh heed,  
 That faith and trust, and all constance,  
 Exiled be, there is no drede,<sup>3</sup>  
 And save only in womanhead,  
 I can ysee no sikerness ;<sup>4</sup>  
 But for all that yet, as I read,  
 Beware alway of doubleness.

Also that the fresh summer flowers,  
 The white and red, the blue and green,  
 Be suddenly with winter showers,  
 Made faint and fade, withouten ween,<sup>5</sup>  
 That trust is none, as ye may seen,  
 In no thing, nor no steadfastness,  
 Except in women, thus I mean ;  
 Yet aye beware of doubleness.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sampson yhad experience  
 That women were full true yfound ;  
 When Dalila of innocence  
 With shearés 'gan his hair to round ;

<sup>1</sup> A knot in a tree.

<sup>2</sup> A man of jollity.

<sup>3</sup> Fear.

<sup>4</sup> Steadfastness.

<sup>5</sup> Doubtless.



To speak also of Rosamond,  
And Cleopatra's faithfulness,  
The stories plainly will confound  
Men that apeach<sup>1</sup> their doubleness.

Single thing is not ypraised,  
Nor of old is no renoun,  
In balance when they be ypesed,<sup>2</sup>  
For lack of weight they be borne down,  
And for this cause of just reason  
These women all of righteousness<sup>3</sup>  
Of choice and free election  
Most love exchange and doubleness.

## L'ENVOYE

O ye women ! which be inclined  
By influence of your nature  
To be as pure as gold yfinéd,  
And in your truth for to endure,  
Armeth yourself in strong armure,  
(Lest men assail your sikerness),  
Set on your breast, yourself t'assure,  
A mighty shield of doubleness.

## THE HOST

Great cheere made our Host us everich one.  
And to the supper set he us anon,  
And served us with vitail of the best ;  
Strong was the wine, and well to drink us lest.<sup>4</sup>  
A seemly man our Hoste was with all  
For to han been a marshal in an hall ;  
A large man he was with eyen steep ;  
A fairer burgess is there none in Cheap ;  
Bold of his speech, and wise, and well ytaught,  
And of manhood ylaked<sup>5</sup> right him naught :  
Eke therto was he a right merry man ;  
And after supper playen he began,  
And spake of mirth amonges other things,  
When that we hadden made our reckonings,  
And said thus : Now Lordings, truely  
Ye been to me welcome right heartily ;  
For, by my troth, if that I shall not lie,  
I saw nat this year swich a company  
At ones in this herberwe<sup>6</sup> as is now ;  
Fain would I do you mirth an I wist how ;  
And of a mirth I am right now bethought  
To don you ease, and it shall cost you nought.  
Ye gon to Canterbury ; God you speed,  
The blissful martyr quite you your meed :  
And well I wot as ye gon by the way  
Ye shapen you to talken and to play ;  
For truely comfort ne mirth is none  
To riden by the way dumb as the stone ;  
And therefore would I maken you disport,  
As I said erst, and don you some comfort.

<sup>1</sup> Impeach.<sup>2</sup> Weighed (Fr. *pesé*).<sup>3</sup> Justice.<sup>4</sup> It pleased us.<sup>5</sup> Lacked.<sup>6</sup> Inn.



We will close this review of the life and works of Chaucer with the following lines, said to have been his last, and written on his deathbed :

Fly from the press,<sup>1</sup> and dwell with sothfastness ;  
 Suffice unto thy good<sup>2</sup> though it be small ;  
 For hoard hath hate, and climbing tickleness,  
 Press hath envy, and weal is blent<sup>3</sup> o'er all.  
 Savour<sup>4</sup> no more than thee behoven shall ;  
 Rede well thyself, that other folk can'st rede,  
 And truth thee shall deliver 't is no drede.<sup>5</sup>

Pain thee not each crooked to redress  
 In trust of her that turneth as a ball ;  
 Great rest standeth in little business ;  
 Beware also to spurn against a nalle ;<sup>6</sup>  
 Strive not as doth a crocké<sup>7</sup> with a wall ;  
 Deemeth<sup>8</sup> thyself that deemest others' deed,  
 And truth thee shall deliver 't is no drede.

That thee is sent receive in buxomness ;<sup>9</sup>  
 The wrestling of this world asketh a fall ;  
 Here is no home, here is but wilderness ;  
 Forth, pilgrim, forth ! O beast out of thy stall ;  
 Look up on high, and thank thy God of all ;  
 Waiveth thy lust, and let thy ghost thee lead,  
 And truth thee shall deliver 't is no drede.

---

<sup>1</sup> Crowd.                    <sup>2</sup> Be satisfied with thy wealth.

<sup>3</sup> Prosperity is ceased.    <sup>4</sup> Taste.                    <sup>5</sup> Without fear.

<sup>6</sup> Nail.                    <sup>7</sup> Pitcher.                    <sup>8</sup> Judge.                    <sup>9</sup> Humility.



## POETS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

### ENGLISH POETS

#### JOHN SKELTON

*Circa 1460-1529*

JOHN SKELTON was born in the county of Norfolk about the year 1460. 'Up to 1500,' says Mr. Chambers, 'Skelton was a highly respectable person, a royal tutor, bepraised by foreign scholars; after 1500 he became a country parson, always in trouble with his bishop, a satirist, and at last an outlaw, obliged to take sanctuary, though with some rich friends who still favoured him. His poetical progression was from laboured seven-line stanzas to the "ragged, tattered, and jagged" metre, in which his abundant flow of words, his real feeling for rhythm and music, his humour and very considerable learning, his love of beauty, and his half-merry, half-savage raillery could all find free vent.'

Skelton studied at Cambridge, if not at both Universities, and began to publish poems between 1480 and 1490. He graduated as poet laureate at Oxford before 1490. This was a degree in grammar, including versification and rhetoric (see Appendix). In 1498 he took Holy Orders, and eventually became Rector of Diss, in Norfolk.

As a scholar Skelton had a European reputation. The great Erasmus has called him *Britannicarum literarum decus et lumen*, or 'the light and ornament of English letters.' His Latin verses are 'distinguished for their purity and classical spirit. As for his English poetry, it is generally more of a mingled yarn, and of a much coarser fabric.' Amongst his writings are *The*



*Boke of Phylip Sparowe*, which was written for Jane Scrope, a pupil of the Black Nuns at Carrow, near Norwich, as a lament for a pet bird killed by a cat; *Ware the Hawke*, written against a 'peakish parson' who followed the hawks into Skelton's churchyard; *Colyn Cloute*, an attack on the corruption of the Church, with hits at Wolsey; *The Tunnyng of Elynour Rummynge*, giving a description of the drunken revels of some women at an ale-house, said to have been written for the amusement of Henry VIII.; a *Speculum Principis*, or 'Prince's Looking-glass,' composed for the young prince when he was his tutor, and *Why come ye not to Court?*

Skelton's most notable satires are *Colyn Cloute* and *Why come ye not to Court?* The former is an attack upon the clergy as a class. The latter is a violent attack on Cardinal Wolsey. It seems that the poet had been in the habit of flattering Wolsey while there seemed to be a possibility of his obtaining preferment at the hands of the Cardinal. A prebendal stall, however, had fallen vacant, and the Cardinal had found a more worthy recipient of the honour. The disappointed poet gave vent to his rage in a lampoon in which he charged Wolsey with avarice, and even with graver faults. He also made spiteful allusions to his 'base original' and 'greasy genealogy,' stating in regard to the latter that he had been 'cast out of a butcher's stall.' For this libellous production the Cardinal ordered him to be arrested, but Skelton fled to the sanctuary at Westminster, where he died in 1529. Pope has referred to him as 'Beastly Skelton.'

The following is an example of the versifying of this poet :

#### FROM 'COLYN CLOUTE'

And if ye stande in doute  
 Who brought this ryme aboute,  
 My name is Colyn Cloute.  
 I purpose to shake oute  
 All my connyng bagge,  
 Lyke a clerkely hagge;  
 For though my ryme be ragged,  
 Tattered and jagged,  
 Rudely rayne beaten,  
 Rusty and mothe eaten,  
 If ye take well therewith,  
 It hath in it some pyth.  
 For, as farre as I can se,  
 It is wronge with eche degre  
 For the temporalte  
 Accuseth the spiritualte;



The spirituall agayne  
 Doth grudge and complayne  
 Upon the temporall men :  
 Thus eche of other blother  
 The tone agayn the tother :  
 Alas, they make me shoder !

### THOMAS OCCLEVE

*Circa 1370-1454*

THE date of birth of Thomas Occleve, or Hoccleve, is uncertain, but in a poem supposed to have been written in 1422 or thereabouts he says : ' Of age I am fifty winters and three,' so presumably he was born about 1370. It is thought that he was a native of London, but it is certain that he passed most of his life there, living in Chester's Inn. He was originally intended for the priesthood, but at the age of nineteen he entered the office of the Privy Seal as a clerk. He was not a great poet, and seems to have lived in straitened circumstances. Henry IV. granted him an annuity of £13 6s. 8d., and, according to his own statement, his earnings amounted to no more than £4 additional to this meagre sum. Yet he was a ' spendthrift,' we are told, and ' a weak creature who tried to win popularity by spending more than he could afford.' Occleve's longest poem is the *Regement of Princes*, dedicated to Henry V., when Prince of Wales. It is written in Chaucer's seven-line stanza, and is a dull and tedious work, except as regards its prologue, which contains his best work. *Male Regle* recounts the youthful follies of the poet. Dr. F. J. Furnivall has edited the *Regement of Princes* and a volume of Occleve's minor poems for the Early English Text Society.

The following lines are from the *Male Regle de T. Occleve* :

Wher was a gretter maister eek than I,  
 Or bet acqweyntid at Westmynstre yate  
 Among the tavernères namily,  
 And cookés whan I cam, eerly or late  
 I pynchid nat at hem in myn acate,  
 But payéd hem as that they axé wolde ;  
 Wherefore I was the welcomer algate,  
 And for ' a verray gentilman ' y-holde.



## JOHN LYDGATE

*Circa 1373-1450*

THE date of Lydgate's birth is not definitely known, but it is certain that he enjoyed considerable distinction as a poet about the year 1430. He was educated at Oxford, but appears to have remained only a short time at that University. On leaving it, he made a tour in France and Italy, and in both those countries studied with diligence and profit. In the one poetry still retained much of the beauty and raciness which had characterized the Provençal minstrelsy; in the other Boccaccio had lately ingrafted on the harmonious language of Dante and Petrarch all the gaiety and varied attractions of romance. When he returned to England he devoted himself to poetry, drawing the subjects of almost all his pieces from Boccaccio and other French authors, and, in some cases, only translating them. Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate have allusions in their poems to almost every fable and important event in Greek and Roman history, and even the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle find a place in their stories, and are dilated upon with minute ingenuity.

The catalogue which has been made of Lydgate's writings by Ritson would imply that he was one of the most prolific of authors. According to this list he produced no less than two hundred and fifty separate pieces. His most important are *The Fall of Princes*, *The Siege of Thebes*, and *The Destruction of Troy*. Among his minor pieces we may mention *The Dance of Death*, a translation made from the French, at the instance of the Chapter of St. Paul's, 'who employed it to illustrate the representations with which their cloister was decorated.' In an elegant little poem on the *Lyfe of Our Lady* there are passages which breathe an Italian sweetness. 'He was the best poet of his age, for if Chaucer's coin were of greater weight for deeper learning, Lydgate's was of a more refined standard for purer language.' He followed his great master with a faithful, though a mild and gentle spirit, and it should never be forgotten that he was the first of our poets to infuse into the language the sweetness and amenity of the Italian.

Dr. Schick, who edited Lydgate's *Temple of Glass* for the Early English Text Society, in 1891, tells us that before he was thirty the poet versified some of the fables of Æsop, and wrote



two poems, the *Chorl and Bird*, and *Horse, Goose, and Sheep*, which were printed by Caxton subsequently. It is thought that the *Troy-Book*, which contains thirty thousand lines, occupied him until the year 1420. In 1445 he wrote verses for the entry of Queen Margaret into London, and about the same time composed his poetical *Testament*. He wrote in all of Chaucer's three chief metres.

The description of Fortune in *The Fall of Princes* would bear comparison with the most admired personifications in the classical writers. He says of her dress :

Her habyte was of manyfolde colours,  
Watchet blewé of fayned stedfastnesse ;  
Her golde allayed like sun in watry showres,  
Meyxt with grene, for change and doublenesse.

But it is in descriptions of morning, or of soft and bowery shades, that the genius of Lydgate chiefly delighted. Take, for example, the following :

Tyll at the last, among the bowés glade,  
Of adventure, I caught a plesaunt shade ;  
Full smothe, and playn, and lusty for to sene,  
And soft as velvett was the yonge grene :  
Where from my hors I did alight as fast,  
And on a bowe aloft his reyné cast.  
So faynte and mate of werynesse I was,  
That I me layd adoune upon the gras,  
Upon a brinké, shortly for to telle,  
Besyde the river of a cristall welle.  
And the water, as I rehersé can,  
Like quické-silver in his streames y-ran,  
Of which the gravell and the brighté stone,  
As any golde, agaynst the sun y-shone.

Lydgate entered the Benedictine Abbey at Bury St. Edmunds before he was fifteen, and became a priest in 1397. In 1423 he was made Prior of Hatfield Regis. The date of his death is uncertain.

## POETS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

### SCOTTISH POETS

#### JAMES I. OF SCOTLAND

1394-1437

ABOUT the beginning of the fifteenth century, and from that time until the end of the first half of the sixteenth, Scottish poetry reached a higher level than that of English writers of verse. The



remarkable gifts of King James the First of Scotland are amongst the most notable evidences of this fact.

The life of this prince is an exemplification of the truth of the old saying, 'Truth is stranger than fiction.' When he was a little boy of about eleven years of age he was taken prisoner. The Duke of Rothesay, his elder brother, had fallen a victim to the criminal ambition of his uncle Albany; and his father, Robert III., anxious to save his surviving son from a like fate, resolved to send him to the Court of France. Although a truce had been declared between the two countries, the ship in which he travelled was captured by an English cruiser off the coast of Norfolk. He was taken, by command of Henry IV., to the English Court—an event which overwhelmed his father with such poignant grief that it literally brought his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. He remained in England from that time until his release in 1424, living for the most part at Windsor Castle, and receiving an education which 'matured him as a knight, a statesman, a scholar, and a gentleman.' The gift which was in him was stirred up by a careful study of the poetic works of Chaucer and Gower. Excelling in every branch of study and every kind of sport, he delighted chiefly in the music of the harp and the composition of verses. After nearly twenty years of exile and imprisonment, the policy or generosity of the English Government allowed his ransom, and he returned to his native country. He did not return alone. He had conceived a strong passion for the Lady Joan Beaufort, and had married her during his exile. Early one morning, as he looked from his window in the Round Tower of Windsor, he had seen the fair vision of this lovely daughter of the Duke of Somerset sauntering amid the flowers. It was a case of love at first sight. To her we are indebted, moreover, for the inspiration which gave its colour to the poet's sweetest song. James was unquestionably the cleverest of the royal Stuarts. He was possessed of all the qualities of a true poet, besides being a wise king and an accomplished gentleman. He has been classed by some critics as the equal of Chaucer in the art of poesy, but this is, perhaps, too high praise. Yet now and then he rises to a very high level indeed, and he is always polished and pleasing.

The end of the Poet-King was tragic. Early in the year 1437 he was barbarously murdered in the Dominican Monastery at



Perth. Sir Robert Graham was the chief perpetrator of the foul deed. Aware of the coming of his murderers, he had hidden in a vault below the flooring of his private room, but they found him, dragged him out, and cut him almost in pieces with sword and knife.

King James's chief poem is the *King's Quhair* (or Book). 'Sleeplessly bewailing his unhappy lot, he rises from his couch to attempt to forget his sorrows in the consolation of study. As he looks out on a fresh morning, he suddenly beholds in the garden beneath his prison tower a lady of transcendent beauty, the sight of whom affects his heart with incurable love. He is carried in vision by Hope to the Court of Venus, who, after testing the purity of his attachment, sends him to Minerva. She, after some virtuous advice, bids him go in quest of Fortune. That goddess teaches him so to climb her wheel as to arrive at the summit of desired felicity. The piece concludes with an enthusiastic expression of gratitude for the blessing he enjoys in his lady's love and worth.'

Besides being romantic and even pathetic, this poet could be humorous at times. Two poems of this class are also ascribed to him : *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, and *Peebles to the Play*. In both of these he describes the merry-makings of the Scottish peasantry.

#### FROM THE 'KING'S QUHAIR'

##### SPRING

##### CANTO II

In Vere, that full of virtue is and good,  
When nature first beginneth her emprise,  
That whilom was, by cruel frost and flood,  
And showers sharp, oppressed in many wise ;  
And Synthius 'ginneth to arise  
High in the East, a morrow soft and sweet,  
Upwards his course to drive in Ariete ;

Passit but midday four 'greis, even  
Of length and breadth his angel wingis bright  
He spread upon the ground down from the heaven ;  
That for gladness and comfort of the sight,  
And with the tickling of his heat and light,  
The tender flowris openit them and sprad,  
And in their nature thankit him for glad.



## JAMES FIRST BEHOLDS THE LADY JANE

## CANTO II

Now there was made fast by the tower's wall,  
 A garden fair ; and in the corners, set  
 An herbere green, with wandis long and small  
 Railed about, and so with treis set  
 Was all the place, and hawthorn hedges knet,  
 That lyf<sup>1</sup> was none, walking there forbye,<sup>2</sup>  
 That might within scarce any wight espy.

So thick the boughis and the leavis green  
 Beshaded all the alleys that there were,  
 And, midst of every herbere, might be seen  
 The sharp, green, sweet juniper,  
 Growing so fair, with branches here and there,  
 That, as it seemed to a lyf without,  
 The boughis spread the arbour all about.

\* \* \* \* \*

And, therewith, cast I down mine eye again  
 Where as I saw, walking under the tower,  
 Full secretly, new comen her to pleyne,  
 The fairest or the freshest youngé flower  
 That ever I saw, methought, before that hour ;  
 For which suddén abate, anon astert  
 The blood of all my body to my heart.

And though I stood abaisit tho a lyte,<sup>3</sup>  
 No wonder was ; for why ? my wittis all  
 Were so o'ercome with pleasaunce and delyte,  
 Only through letting of mine eyén fall,  
 That suddenly my heart became her thrall  
 For ever of free will ; for of menáce  
 There was no token in her sweeté face.

And in my head I drew right hastily ;  
 And eftsoons<sup>4</sup> I lean'd it out again ;  
 And saw her walk that<sup>5</sup> very womanly,  
 With no wight mo' but only women twain.  
 Then 'gan I study in myself and seyne ;  
 ' Ah, sweet, are ye a worldly creature ?  
 Or heavenly thing in likeness of Nature ?

' Or are ye god Cupidis own princess,  
 And comen are to loose me out of band ?  
 Or are ye very Nature, the goddess  
 That have depainted with your heavenly hand  
 This garden full of flouris as they stand ?  
 What shall I think ?—alas !—what reverence  
 Shall I mester<sup>6</sup> unto your excellence ?'

<sup>1</sup> Living person.

<sup>2</sup> Besides.

<sup>3</sup> A little abashed.

<sup>4</sup> Soon after. Coleridge uses *eftsoons* in the *Ancient Mariner*.

<sup>5</sup> So.

<sup>6</sup> Minister.



## MINOR POET OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

### ENGLISH POET

*Sir Thomas Clanvowe* (fourteenth and fifteenth century) is a name which was first mentioned in the history of English literature by William Morris in 1895, when, in editing the text of *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale* for the Kelmscott Press, he stated that Professor Skeat had discovered that at the end of the best MSS. the author was called Clanvowe. In 1897 this information was confirmed and expanded by Professor Skeat himself in the supplementary volume of his *Oxford Chaucer* (1894-1897).

The beautiful romance of *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale* was published by Thynne in 1532, and was attributed by him and successive editors down to the days of Henry Bradshaw to Chaucer. The historic and literary importance of *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale* is great. It is the work of a poet who had studied the prosody of Chaucer with more intelligent care than either Occleve or Lydgate, and who therefore forms an important link between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in English poetry.<sup>1</sup>

## MINOR POETS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

### SCOTTISH POETS

*Blind Harry* (flourished 1470-1492), or Harry the Minstrel, was the author of a poem entitled *William Wallace*. It is written in ten-syllable lines of heroic verse, and is 'not destitute of vigorous and picturesque passages.'

*Robert Henryson* (circa 1430-1506) was 'doubtless the most Chaucerian of the Scottish Chaucerians.' He was a monk or schoolmaster of Dunfermline, was admitted a member of the University of Glasgow in 1462, and practised for some time as a notary public. His chief works are : *The Moral Fables of Æsop* ;

<sup>1</sup> Précis of article in *Encyclopædia Britannica*.



*Orpheus and Eurydice*; *The Testament of Fair Creseide*, written as a sequel to Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressida*; and the beautiful pastoral of *Robin and Makyne*, which is in Percy's *Reliques*. His fables are bright, witty, and dramatic.

*William Dunbar* (circa 1460–1520) was a powerful and original poet. His chief poem is entitled *The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins*, 'a fantastic and terrible impersonation, with the intense reality of Dante and the picturesque inventiveness of Callot.' He is generally looked upon by critics as the greatest and most gifted of the old Scottish poets. He graduated at St. Andrews in 1479, and afterwards became a Franciscan, but subsequently 'threw off the habit.' He also wrote *The Thrissill and the Rois*, *The Golden Targe*, *The Merle and the Nightingale*, and *The Lament for the Markaris*.

FROM 'THE LAMENT FOR THE MARKARIS'

Our plesance heir is all vane glory,  
This fals world is bot transitory,  
The flesche is brukle,<sup>1</sup> the Fend is sle,<sup>2</sup>  
Timor mortis conturbat me.

*Gavin Douglas* (circa 1472–1522) was a 'voluminous and elevating' poet. He was the third son of Archibald, Earl of Angus, famous as 'Bell the Cat.' He was in Holy Orders, and became Bishop of Dunkeld. His best-known work is a complete translation of the *Æneid* of Virgil into the Scotch language.

Gavin Douglas condemned Caxton's translation of Virgil thus:

Adherand to my protestatioun,  
Thocht Williame Caxtoun, of Inglis natioun,  
In pross<sup>3</sup> hes prent ane buik of Inglis gros,  
Clepanid it Virgill in Eneados,  
Quhilk that he sais of Frensch he did translait,  
It has na thing ado therwith, God wait,  
Nor na mair like than the devill and Sanct Austyne.

<sup>1</sup> Brittle.

<sup>2</sup> Fiend is sly.

<sup>3</sup> Prose.



# GREATER POETS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

## ENGLISH POETS

### EDMUND SPENSER

1553-1599

EDMUND SPENSER, said to be 'of all the poets the most poetical,' was born in London in 1553. He was a member of an illustrious family, which, nevertheless, was by no means largely endowed with this world's goods—or, at least, the future poet's share was small. Coming two centuries after Chaucer, and being just eleven years older than Shakespeare, he is accounted the greatest English poet intervening between these two bright particular stars of poetical literature. He was educated at the University of Cambridge, and shed great lustre on that seat of learning by the marvellous store of practical knowledge which he acquired and assimilated within its walls. Even the 'Satiric Nash' speaks of him as 'the heavenly Spenser,' and it is not too much to say that his qualities of mind gained for him the love of his contemporaries, even as his unquestionable superiority placed him above their envy. He has been described as standing alone in the history of English poetical literature, inasmuch as he has never been imitated with success. His power consists mainly in a richness of description and a power of vitalizing everything he touches into an almost visible and tangible reality, rather than in mere mechanical skill in delineation of character. His style is so unique that he may said to be 'a school in himself.' In cadence and structure his language is essentially different from that of any other writer of his time, and, indeed, from any writer



of any time. 'He describes *to the eye* and communicates to the airy conceptions of allegory the splendour and vivacity of visible objects. He has the exhaustless fertility of Rubens, with that great painter's sensuous and voluptuous profusion of colour.'

Our information with regard to the poet's early life is somewhat meagre. Though coming of a noble race, nothing is known of his parents, nor can the historian state with certainty where he went to school. At the age of sixteen he obtained a sizarship at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, and took the degree of M.A. in 1576. At the University he formed a friendship with Gabriel Harvey, and this companionship exerted an influence over his fortunes which was considerable. Harvey was a classical scholar, whom the poet afterwards immortalized as *Hobbinol* in the *Shepherd's Calendar*, published in 1579.

Having, it is thought, incurred the displeasure of the Master of his college at Cambridge, Spenser is supposed to have become a tutor to some young friend in the North of England. Just so much may be said of his earlier years.

The beginning of his fame may be traced to an unfortunate affair of the heart. A lady, whom he calls Rosalind, 'made a plaything of his heart, and, when tired of her sport, cast it from her.' The rejected and dejected lover took refuge in the art with which Nature had so richly gifted him, and the attention of the world was soon called to his genius by the publication of the *Shepherd's Calendar*. Harvey induced the poet to come to London, as a field more favourable to his muse, and introduced him to 'Maister Philip Sidney, worthy of all titles, both of Chivalry and Poesy.' From this it was but a step to an introduction to Dudley, Earl of Leicester, Sidney's uncle, who, in turn, brought the poet into the presence-chamber of Queen Elizabeth herself. For awhile the favour of the Court was evinced only in a series of occasional small diplomatic appointments, but these eventually culminated in his being chosen to accompany Lord Grey de Wilton to Ireland as secretary, on the nomination of that nobleman as Lord-Lieutenant. This took place in 1580, and for the two following years Spenser continued in that country, returning to England at the end of that period on the recall of Lord Grey.

Four years afterwards the poet was rewarded for his services



by a royal grant of more than 3,000 acres in the county of Cork. The estate, which was called Kilcolman, formed a part of the forfeited lands of the rebel Earl of Desmond, of which a large portion had already been allotted to Raleigh. The death of Sidney in 1586 was a great blow to Spenser, for which a growing friendship with Raleigh consoled him in some measure. He married, probably in 1594, a lady named Elizabeth, 'in whose honour he sang the sweetest marriage-song our language boasts.'<sup>1</sup> About twelve years after his first settlement in his Irish home a torrent of rebellion and revolt swept over the land. His castle was attacked and burnt to the ground. The poet and his wife had scarcely time to make good their escape. In their precipitate haste their new-born child was left to perish in the flames. Three months afterwards, impoverished and crushed with grief, the poet died, January 16th, 1599, at an inn in King Street, Westminster. In Westminster Abbey, near to the dust of Chaucer by his own request, the ashes of Edmund Spenser were laid to rest.

Critics vary considerably in their views regarding the genius of Spenser. 'This poet,' says Hume, 'contains great beauties, a sweet and harmonious versification, easy elocution, a fine imagination; yet does the perusal of his work become so tedious that one never finishes it from the mere pleasure that it affords; it soon becomes a kind of task-reading.'

'We shall nowhere find,' says Campbell, 'more airy and expansive images of visionary things, a sweeter tone of sentiment, or a finer flush in the colours of language than in this Rubens of English poetry. . . . Though his story grows desultory, the sweetness and grace of his manner still abide by him. He is a speaker whose tones continue to be pleasing though he speaks too long.'

Hazlitt writes: 'Though much later than Chaucer, his obligations to preceding writers are less. He has in some measure borrowed the plan of his poem from Ariosto; but he has ingrafted upon it an exuberance of fancy and an endless voluptuousness of sentiment not to be found in the Italian writer. . . . There is an originality, richness, and variety in his allegorical personages that almost vies with the splendour of ancient

<sup>1</sup> She was not, as has been commonly assumed, a peasant girl, but evidently a gentlewoman.—CRAIK.



mythology. If Ariosto transports us into the regions of romance, all Spenser's poetry is fairyland. . . . The poet lays us in the lap of a lovelier nature, by the sound of softer streams, among greener hills and fairer valleys. He paints nature, not as we find it, but as we expected to find it; and fulfils the delightful promise of our youth.'

And yet Ellis could write: 'It is scarcely possible to accompany Spenser's allegorical heroes to the end of their excursions. They want flesh and blood—a want for which nothing can compensate. The personification of abstract ideas furnishes the most brilliant images for poetry, but these meteor forms, which startle and delight us when our senses are flurried by passion, must not be submitted to our cool and deliberate examination. . . . Personification protracted into allegory affects a modern reader almost as disagreeably as inspiration continued to madness.'

The *Faerie Queene* is described by its author, in a preliminary letter to Raleigh, as 'a continued allegory, or dark conceit,' the heroine standing for 'the most excellent and glorious person' of Queen Elizabeth. Many other more or less eminent personages of the day are portrayed in the poem. It takes rank in literature as 'the most interesting allegory ever written,' which 'carries us on by making us forget that it is an allegory at all.' It is marked throughout by a high moral tone, an exquisite sense of beauty, and a sweet and melodious cadence. In short, it is saturated throughout with the Divine spirit of poesy. 'It is a labyrinth of sweet sounds that would cloy by their very sweetness, but that the ear is constantly relieved and enchanted by their continued variety of modulation.' 'It is the perfection of melting harmony dissolving the soul in pleasure or holding it captive in the chains of suspense.' The first three books were published in 1590, and dedicated to Queen Elizabeth.<sup>1</sup> In 1596 he published a new edition, with three additional books. 'Of the remaining six, which were to complete the original design, two imperfect cantos of *Mutabilitie* only have been recovered, which were introduced into the folio edition of 1609, as a part of the lost book, entitled *The Legend of Constancy*' (Todd's *Life of Spenser*).

<sup>1</sup> The Queen bestowed upon the author, in February, 1591, a pension of £50.



The stanza in which the *Faerie Queene* is written, which has been copied successfully by Lord Byron and others, is now known as the 'Spenserian Stanza.'

Francis Turner Palgrave laid it down as an axiom that the genius of Spenser did itself justice only in poems of some length, and John Ruskin pointed out that the 'Poet of Beauty' was only half estimated because so few people took the pains to think out his meaning, whereas no time devoted to profane literature was, in his opinion, better rewarded than that spent earnestly in the study of Spenser. The *Faerie Queene* may certainly be called 'a poem of some length.' Speaking of its incompleteness, Mr. Shaw says the paradox of Hesiod may be applied to it—the 'half is more than the whole.'

The most notable of Spenser's poems published before the *Faerie Queene*, which is his greatest work, are the *Shepherd's Calendar* and *Mother Hubberd's Tale*. The former consists of twelve poems called Eclogues. The shepherds are chiefly clergy of the Church, their parishioners being the sheep. They include Algrind, who is meant to represent Grindall, Archbishop of Canterbury; and Morell, who is none other than the poet's enemy, Aylmer, Bishop of London. This poem was reprinted four times during Spenser's lifetime, between 1581 and 1597. It by no means reaches the high level to which its author subsequently rose as a poet. *Mother Hubberd's Tale* is a finer and more finished composition.

Besides these, he published at various times a number of other poems, including *Colin Clout's come Home again*; a translation of Virgil's *Culex*; *The Tears of the Muses*; *Hymns and Visions*; *Espousal Poems*, *Sonnets*, etc. Unfortunately, a portion of his work has been lost.

'When we look broadly at the poetic work of Spenser,' says Mr. Edmund Gosse, 'we find that the *Faerie Queene* stands out so massively that it dwarfs all his other achievements. Taking this glorious fragment, then, as representative of his power and quality, we see that the most prominent characteristic of Spenser is his intense conviction of the paramount importance of beauty. No poet has ever lived in whom the obsession of loveliness, in person and scenery, in thought and act, in colour and sound, in association and instinct, was so constraining as it is in Spenser. He is led by beauty as by a golden chain, and his work has the



weaknesses inherent on a too persistent concentration of the mind on this particular species of harmony. He lacks sublimity; he does not know the heightening power of austerity in treatment; he shrinks from all life that is not led in the mazes of an enchanted forest or by the lustral waters of an ocean. Accordingly, his stateliness and his fantastic pageant of the imagination have a certain unreality about them, which his magic is seldom quite intense enough to move. His scenes are too spectacular and too phantasmal to give complete satisfaction to any but children and poets.'

Yet Spenser has been acknowledged 'a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas.' His representations of womanhood, for instance, are living sources of education. In support of this statement we need only point to Florimel, Serena, Una, Amoret, Britomart, and Belphebe. Nor is he less happy in his masterly treatment of the phenomena of the physical world. His influence as a 'master' can be traced in the writings of Pope, Shelley, Keats, and Byron. He has been called the poet's poet; Thomson and Collins copied him, and Cowley and Dryden acknowledged their indebtedness to him. When Pope was 'lipping in numbers' at the age of twelve, he wrote a poem in which he tried to reproduce the beauties of the *Faerie Queene*. 'In the masque of English poets Edmund Spenser rides on a white horse and blows a golden trumpet, the champion of beauty and Paladin of poets.'

It is always interesting to note the opinion which one great poet forms of another, and the highest praise has been given to Spenser by Southey, who expresses his admiration in the following noble lines:

My Master dear arose to mind,  
 He on whose song, while yet I was a boy,  
 My spirit fed, attracted to its kind,  
 And still insatiate of the growing joy;  
 He on whose tomb these eyes were wont to dwell,  
 With inward yearnings which I may not tell;  
 He whose green bays shall bloom for ever young,  
 And whose dear name whenever I repeat,  
 Reverence and love are trembling on my tongue;  
 Sweet Spenser—sweetest bard; yet not more sweet  
 Than pure was he, and not more pure than wise,  
 High Priest of all the Muses' mysteries.

'In the period between Chaucer and Surrey,' says Dr. Courthope, in his exhaustive work on English poetry, 'we see the



medieval current running with preponderating power, blended only with a faint national colour derived from Chaucer's dramatic genius, and with an equally slight tinge of classicism, reflected from his study of Ovid, Virgil, and Statius. The increasing strength of the Renaissance is indicated, through the sixteenth century, by a profusion of superficial classical imagery, which mixes itself, in naïve incongruity, with the allegorical forms peculiar to the learning of the Middle Ages. The spirit of this period is illustrated and summed up in the poetry of Spenser.'

FROM 'THE FAERIE QUEENE'

BELPHŒBE

BOOK II., CANTO III

Her face so fair, as flesh it seemed not,  
But heavenly portrait of bright angels' hue,  
Clear as the sky, without blame or blot,  
Through goodly mixture of complexions due ;  
And in her cheeks the vermeil red did shew  
Like roses in a bed of lilies shed,  
The which ambrosial odours from them threw,  
And gazers sense with double pleasure fed,  
Able to heal the sick and to revive the dead.

In her fair eyes two living lamps did flame,  
Kindled above at the heavenly Maker's light,  
And darted fire-beams out of the same,  
So passing persant<sup>1</sup> and so wondrous bright,  
That quite bereav'd the rash beholder's sight ;  
In them the blinded god his lustful fire  
To kindle oft assayed, but had no might ;  
For, with dread majesty and awful ire  
She broke his wanton darts, and quenched base desire.<sup>2</sup>

Her ivory forehead, full of bounty brave,  
Like a broad table did itself dispread,  
For Love his lofty triumphs to engrave,  
And write the battles of his great godhead :  
All good and honour might therein be read ;  
For there their dwelling was. And when she spake,  
Sweet words, like dropping honey, she did shed ;  
And twixt the pearls and rubins<sup>3</sup> softly brake  
A silver sound, that heavenly music seemed to make.

Upon her eyelids many Graces sat,  
Under the shadow of her even brows,  
Working belgardes and amorous retrate ;<sup>4</sup>  
And everyone her with a grace endows,  
And every one with meekness to her bows :  
So glorious mirror of celestial grace,  
And sovereign monument of mortal vows,  
How shall frail pen describe her heavenly face,  
For fear, through want of skill, her beauty to disgrace !

<sup>1</sup> Piercing.

<sup>2</sup> Teeth and lips.

<sup>3</sup> Belphebe is Chastity.

<sup>4</sup> Fair looks and amorous aspect.



## THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS

## BOOK II., CANTO VIII

And is there care in Heaven ? And is there love  
 In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,  
 That may compassion of their evils move ?  
 There is :—else much more wretched were the case  
 Of men than beasts. But O ! th' exceeding grace  
 Of highest God, that loves his creatures so,  
 And all his works with mercy doth embrace,  
 That blessed angels he sends to and fro,  
 To serve to wicked men, to serve his wicked foe !  
 How oft do they their silver bowers leave  
 To come to succour us that succour want !  
 How oft do they with golden pinions cleave  
 The fitting skies, like flying pursuivant,  
 Against foul fiends to aid us militant !  
 They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,  
 And their bright squadrons round about us plant ;  
 And all for love and nothing for reward :  
 O, why should heavenly God to men have such regard ?

## CONCLUSION OF MERLIN'S PROPHECY

## BOOK III., CANTO IV

Nor shall the Saxons' selves all peaceably  
 Enjoy the crown, which they from Britons won  
 First ill, and ruléd wickedly :  
 For, ere two hundred years be full outrun,  
 There shall a Raven,<sup>1</sup> far from rising sun,  
 With his wide wings upon them fiercely fly,  
 And bid his faithless chickens overrun  
 The fruitless plains, and with fell cruelty,  
 In their avenge, tread down the victor's surquedry.<sup>2</sup>  
 Yet shall a third both these and thine subdue :  
 There shall a lion from the sea-bord wood  
 Of Neustria<sup>3</sup> come roaring, with a crew  
 Of hungry whelps, his bataillons bold brood,  
 Whose claws were newly dipt in curdled blood.  
 That from the Daniske tyrant's head shall rend  
 Th' usurpéd crown, as if that he were wood,  
 And the spoil of the country conqueréd  
 Amongst his young ones shall divide with bountyhead.  
 Tho,<sup>4</sup> when the term is full accomplishéd,  
 There shall a spark of fire, which hath long while  
 Been in his ashes rakéd up and hid,  
 Be freshly kindled in the fruitful isle  
 Of Mona,<sup>5</sup> where it lurkéd in exile ;  
 Which shall break forth into bright burning flame,  
 And reach into the house that bears the style  
 Of royal majesty and soveriegn name :  
 So shall the Britons' blood their crown again reclaim.

<sup>1</sup> The Raven was the enchanted standard of the Danes.

<sup>2</sup> Presumption.

<sup>3</sup> The Frankish name of Normandy.

<sup>4</sup> Then.

<sup>5</sup> The Mortimers and the Tudors were Welsh families, or of Welsh alliance.



Thenceforth eternal union shall be made  
 Between the nations different afore,  
 And sacred Peace shall lovingly persuade  
 The warlike minds to learn her goodly lore,  
 And civil arms to exercise no more :  
 Then shall the royal virgin reign, which shall  
 Stretch her white rod over the Belgic<sup>1</sup> shore  
 And the Great Castle smite so sore withal,  
 That it shall make him shake, and shortly learn to fall.  
 But yet the end is not.'—There Merlin stayed.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### SONNET XXVI

Sweet is the rose, but grows upon a brere ;  
 Sweet is the juniper, but sharp his bough ;  
 Sweet is the eglantine, but pricketh near ;  
 Sweet is the furbloom, but his branches rough ;  
 Sweet is the cyprus, but his rind is tough ;  
 Sweet is the nut, but bitter is his pill ;  
 Sweet is the broomflower, but yet sour enough ;  
 And sweet is moly, but his root is ill ;  
 So, every sweet with sour is temp'rd still,  
 That maketh it be coveted the more :  
 For easy things, that may be got at will,  
 Most sorts of men do set but little store.  
 Why then should I account of little pain,  
 That endless pleasure shall unto me gain ?

#### FROM 'THE EPITHALAMION'

My love is now awake out of her dreams,  
 And her fair eyes, like stars that dimmed were  
 With darksome cloud, now show their goodly beams  
 More bright than Hesperus his head doth rear.  
 Come now, ye damsels, daughters of Delight,  
 Help quickly her to dight !  
 But first come, ye fair Hours, which were begot,  
 In Jove's sweet paradise, of day and night,  
 Which do the seasons of the year allot,  
 And all that ever in this world is fair,  
 Do make and still repair !  
 And ye three handmaids of the Cyprian Queen,  
 The which do still adorn her beauty's pride,  
 Help to adorn my beautifulest bride !  
 And as ye her array, still throw between  
 Some graces to be seen ;  
 And as ye use to Venus, to her sing,  
 The whiles the woods shall answer and your echo ring.

\* \* \* \* \*

Behold, while she before the altar stands,  
 Hearing the holy priest that to her speaks,  
 And blesses her with his two happy hands,  
 How the red roses flush up in her cheeks,  
 And the pure snow with goodly vermeil stain  
 Like crimson dyed in grain ;

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth assisted the Netherland Provinces in their revolt against Spain. The Great Castle is the Castilian Power.



That even the angels, which continually  
 About the sacred altar do remain,  
 Forget their service, and about her fly,  
 Oft peeping in her face, that seems more fair  
 The more on it they stare :  
 But her sad eyes, still fastened on the ground,  
 Are governéd with goodly modesty,  
 That suffers not one look to glance awry,  
 Which may let in a little thought unsound.  
 Why blush ye, Love, to give to me your hand,  
 The pledge of all our band ?  
 Sing, ye sweet angels ! Alleluia sing,  
 That all the woods may answer and your echo ring !

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

And ye, high Heavens ! the temple of the gods,  
 In which a thousand torches flaming bright  
 Do burn, that to us, wretched earthly clods,  
 In dreadful darkness lend desired light ;  
 And all ye Powers which in the same remain,  
 More than we men can feign,  
 Pour out your blessing on us plenteously,  
 And happy influence upon us rain,  
 That we may rise a large posterity,  
 Which from the earth, which may they long possess  
 With lasting happiness,  
 Up to your haughty palaces may mount,  
 And for the guerdon of their glorious merit,  
 May heavenly tabernacles there inherit,  
 'Of blessed saints for to increase the count !  
 So let us rest, sweet Love, in hope of this,  
 And cease till then our timely joys to sing,  
 The woods no more us answer, nor our echo ring.

### JOHN LYLY

*Born about 1554. Died 1600*

If all the Earthe were paper white,  
 And all the sea were incke,  
 'Twere not enough for me to write  
 As my poore hart doth thinke.

THIS poetical sentiment was written by John Lyly, described by Ben Jonson as 'a neat, spruce, affecting courtier, one that wears clothes well, and in fashion ; practiseth by his glass how to salute ; speaks good remnants, notwithstanding the base viol and tobacco ; swears tersely, and with variety ; cares not what lady's favour he belies, or great man's familiarity ; a good property to perfume the boot of a coach. He will borrow another man's horse to praise, and backs him as his own. Or, for a need, on foot can post himself into credit with his mer-



chant, only with the gingle of his spur, and the jerk of his wand.' Thus rare Ben Jonson is supposed to have portrayed, in the 'Fastidious Brisk' of his *Every Man out of His Humour*, the poet who is justly celebrated in the history of English poetry as 'Shakespeare's chief exemplar.'

John Lyly was born in Kent in 1553 or 1554, and was educated at Magdalen Hall, Oxford. He produced nine plays between the years 1579 and 1600. These works were chiefly written for Court entertainments, and were performed by the scholars at St. Paul's. Queen Elizabeth is said to have honoured him with her patronage, but the poet, in the course of a petition for the post of Master of the Revels, thus addresses her Majesty :

'For these ten years I have attended with an unwearied patience, and now I know not what crab took me for an oyster, that in the midst of your sunshine, of your most gracious aspect, hath thrust a stone between the shells to eat me alive that only live on dead hopes.'

Of Lyly's nine plays, only two are poetical, one being in rhyme, and another in blank verse. As a poet, he is 'in his happiest efforts elegant and fanciful ; but his genius was better suited for the lighter kinds of lyric poetry than for the drama.' He is remarkable as having contributed a word to the English language. 'The singular affectation known by the name of Euphuism was,' says Dr. Craik, 'like some other celebrated absurdities, the invention of a man of true genius—John Lyly, a dramatist and poet—the first part of whose prose romance of *Euphues* appeared in 1578 or 1579.' The same writer also adds : 'Although Lyly, in his verse as well as in his prose, is always artificial to excess, his ingenuity and finished elegance are frequently very captivating. Perhaps, indeed, our language is, after all, indebted to this writer and his Euphuism for not a little of its present euphony.' The words euphuize, euphuism, euphuistic, and euphuist, all owe their origin to the style of this once popular book. Euphuism is defined as an affected or bombastic style of language ; or, secondarily, a high-flown expression.

But the chief claim of this poet to remembrance may be traced to the fact that his plays exerted a considerable influence in the formation of Shakespeare's style. 'In comedy Lyly is Shakespeare's only model ; the evidence of the latter's



study and imitation of him is abundant, and Lyly's influence is of a far more permanent nature than any exercised on the great poet by other writers. It extends beyond the boundaries of mechanical style to the more important matters of structure and spirit; and it is further traceable in Ben Jonson's method of handling history, pastoral, and the comedy of humours.' The words just quoted are from a new volume entitled *The Complete Works of John Lyly*, now for the first time collected and edited from the earliest quartos by R. Warwick Bond. Blount, who published the Second Folio of Shakespeare in 1632, says of Lyly: 'This poet sat at the Sunne's Table. Apollo gave him a wreath of his own Bayes, without snatching. The Lyre he played on had no borrowed strings.' The following is one of his songs:

O cruel Love! on thee I lay  
 My curse, which shall strike blind the day:  
 Never may sleep, with velvet hand,  
 Charm thine eyes with sacred wand;  
 Thy gaolers shall be hopes and fears;  
 Thy prison-mates groans, sighs and tears;  
 Thy play, to wear out weary times,  
 Fantastic passions, vows, and rhymes.  
 Thy bread be frowns, thy drink be gall,  
 Such as when you Phao call;  
 The bed thou liest on be despair,  
 Thy sleep fond dreams, thy dreams long care.  
 Hope, like thy fool, at thy bed's head,  
 Mocks thee till madness strike thee dead,  
 As, Phao, thou dost me with thy proud eyes;  
 In thee poor Sappho lives, for thee she dies

The same phrases are frequently to be found in the plays of Shakespeare and those of Lyly. The following are some notable examples:

Shakespeare says in *As You Like It*:

Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
 Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.

Lyly says:

That the fayrer the stone is in the Toade's head, the more pestilent the poyson is in her bowelles; that talk the more it is seasoned with fine phrases, the lesse it savoreth of true meaning.

Again, Shakespeare says:

Two may keep counsel, putting one away.

Lyly says:

Two may keep counsaile if one be away.



And, again, Shakespeare says :

The empty vessel makes the greatest sound.

Lyly says :

The empty vessell giveth a greater sound than the full barrell.

Many passages which bear a close resemblance to the advice of Polonius are to be found in the *Euphues* of Lyly. For example :

*Polonius.* Give thy thought no tongue.

*Euphues.* Be not lavish of thy tongue.

*Polonius.* Beware of entrance to a quarrel.

*Euphues.* Be not quarrellous for every light occasion.

*Polonius.* Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice.

*Euphues.* It shall be there better to hear what they say, than to speak what thou thinkest.

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE<sup>1</sup>

1564-1616

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE was born in Henley Street, Stratford-on-Avon, in April, 1564. The actual day is not known with certainty, but he was baptized on the 26th of that month, and, if tradition is to be credited, the day of his death was the anniversary of his birth. In the time of Shakespeare, the town of Stratford had a population of 1,400. Its buildings and houses were of a poor order of architecture, with the exception of the parish church and the Guildhall. In the latter, companies of strolling players would at times perform, when their services were secured by the Corporation of the little town.

The future poet's father was John Shakespeare, described as a well-to-do wool-comber, who was himself in a smaller way a man of many parts. He made and sold gloves, was a small farmer, and though he was totally devoid of education, he rose to some distinction in his native town, being in his later years High Bailiff, Chamberlain, and Alderman. His wife was Mary Arden, his landlord's daughter. Her father had died a year before the marriage took place, leaving her the possessor of considerable property, her family having been Warwickshire gentry

<sup>1</sup> Professor Dowden says : ' The poet's name is rightly written *Shakespeare*, rightly also written *Shakspeare*. If I err in choosing *Shakspeare* I err with the owner of the names.'



since before the Conquest. Two of the family had filled posts of distinction in the household of King Henry VII. William was the eldest son of John and Mary Shakespeare, but he had two elder sisters. Besides these three, they had a daughter, who survived the poet, and is mentioned in his will; another daughter, who died at an early age; and three sons—Gilbert, Richard, and Edmund. The last-mentioned was an actor, and died in 1607.

Not far from the stately parish church of Stratford, with its 'tall gray spire, springing from amid embowering elms and lime-trees,' there still stands a portion of the house in which the greatest of English poets was born. According to Dr. Collier, 'Sun and rain and air have gradually reduced the plastered timber of its old neighbours into powder; but its wood and lime hold together still, and the room in which baby Shakespeare's voice uttered its first feeble wail. The dingy walls of the little chamber are scribbled all over with the names of visitors, known and unknown to fame. It is pleasant to think that this shrine, sacred to the memory of the greatest English writer, has been lately purchased by the English nation,<sup>1</sup> so that lovers of Shakespeare have now the satisfaction of feeling that the relics, which tell so picturesque a story of the poet's earliest days, are in safe and careful keeping.'

It is probable that William got all the regular teaching he ever had at the Stratford Free Grammar School. Certain it is that he could not have received any to speak of from his father and mother, for neither of those good people could write. It is to be noted, however, that in the reign of Elizabeth this accomplishment was by no means a usual one even in higher ranks of society than that to which they belonged. The local Grammar School was founded in the reign of Edward IV.; it was one of those endowed schools which stand as monuments of the pious charity of former ages. To this institution, which exists at the present day, William was sent by his parents. Aubrey, a historian who died in 1700 or thereabouts, states a tradition to the effect that the great dramatist had been in his earlier days a schoolmaster in the country. Perhaps he was what is now known as a pupil-teacher, employed to assist the regular staff after he had passed through the lower classes in the school.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Collier wrote in 1861.



His education in classics appears to have been limited, but in spite of the sneer of Ben Jonson, who stigmatized it as 'small Latin and less Greek,' there is evidence in his writings that he was by no means ignorant of these languages. Professor Dowden says concerning this : ' That he had got by heart his Lily's Latin Grammar, and was acquainted with the rudiments of that language, is almost certain ; and it has been noticed that he uses several English words—as, for example, the *continents* of rivers for containing banks, *quantity* for value, and others—in senses which would not occur to one who was absolutely ignorant of Latin. Afterwards—perhaps during his London life—Shakespeare seems to have learned something of French, and possibly also of Italian.' It is certainly unquestionable that from an early age he possessed a remarkable facility, amounting to a genius, for acquiring the niceties, and mastering the subtleties, of his own language. His store of English was vast. Mr. Stopford Brooke tells us in an interesting and valuable footnote that the great dramatist uses 15,000 words, and wrote pure English. Out of every five verbs, adverbs, and nouns—*e.g.*, in the last act of *Othello*—four are Teutonic ; and he is more Teutonic in comedy than in tragedy.

When Shakespeare was about fourteen years of age, his father met with reverses which reduced him from a state of opulence to a state of painful poverty, which continued for a number of years—indeed, until his son became successful as a dramatist. It is related, to the credit of the poet, that he maintained his father in ease and comfort during his declining years. The old man died in 1601. His father's poverty caused William to be taken away from school earlier than he would otherwise have been, and it is thought that he was obliged at a comparatively early age to earn a living for himself, perhaps by assisting John at his trade of wool-combing. But opinions are strangely at variance upon this point. Besides the aforementioned statement made by Aubrey to the effect that he became ' a school-master in the country,' it is said that he was ' bound apprentice to a butcher,' while some historians conclude from the number and accuracy of the legal allusions in his plays that he must have spent some time in an attorney's office as a clerk.

In November, 1582, the Bishop of Worcester issued a license for the marriage of William Shakespeare to Anne Hathaway upon



once asking of the banns. The reason for this haste became obvious upon the birth of their first child, which took place on the 26th of May, 1583. It was the wish of the bride's friends that the child should be born in lawful wedlock. Richard Hathaway, Anne's father, was a substantial yeoman, whose home was at Shottery, a beautiful hamlet about a mile from Stratford. He had died five months before the marriage. Anne was eight years older than William, and it cannot be stated with any certainty that the marriage was happy or unhappy. They remained in Stratford for four or five years. In 1585 Anne gave birth to twins, Hamnet and Judith, who were called after Hamnet and Judith Sadler, a married couple who were friends of the poet. Hamnet was an only son, and died in 1596. According to tradition, which must ever be the uncertain basis for much of the history of Shakespeare, he left his children in the country with his wife while he was earning his living in the great city, paying an annual visit to his home.

The well-known story of the deer-stealing in Charlote Woods is without proof, but it is likely that his youth was of a nature to foster the idea of it. Rowe, his first biographer, tells the story thus :

'He had, by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company ; and, amongst them, some that made a frequent practice of deer-stalking, engaged him, more than once, in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlote, near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely ; and in order to revenge the ill-usage, he made a ballad upon him. And though this, probably the first, essay of his poetry be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter, that it redoubled the prosecution against him, to that degree, that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire for some time, and shelter himself in London.'

On doubtful points like this, one is fain to take refuge in quotations from the most reliable authorities rather than to speculate, or even to express an opinion in one's own words. Dr. Dowden supplements the above by the following statement : 'Some of the details of this story are undoubtedly incorrect, but there is good reason to believe that a foundation of truth underlies the tradition. Sir T. Lucy was an important person in the



neighbourhood—a Member of Parliament, one of the Puritan party (with which our dramatist can never have been in sympathy)—and about the time of this alleged deer-stealing frolic was concerned in framing a Bill in Parliament for the preservation of game. Although he did not possess what is properly a park at Charlote, he had deer; Shakespeare and his companions may have had a struggle with Sir T. Lucy's men. A verse of the ballad ascribed to the young poacher has been traditionally handed down, and in it the writer puns upon the name Lucy—"O lowsie Lucy"—in a way sufficiently insulting. It is noteworthy that in the first scene of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Justice Shallow is introduced as highly incensed against Sir John Falstaff, who has beaten his men, killed his deer, and broke open his lodge; the Shallows, like Shakespeare's old antagonist, have "luses" in their coat of arms, and the Welsh parson admirably misunderstands the word—"the dozen white louses do become an old coat well." It can hardly be doubted that, when this scene was written, Shakespeare had some grudge against the Lucy family, and in making them ridiculous before the Queen he may have had an amused sense that he was now obtaining a success for his boyish lampoon little dreamed of when it was originally put into circulation among the good folk of Stratford.'

Robert Greene, in a pamphlet written upon his deathbed, and entitled *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*, makes an insulting allusion to Shakespeare. Addressing three of his fellow-authors, he warns them against reposing any trust in players. The passage in which the allusion occurs is as follows: 'Yes, trust them not, for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his tyger's heart wrapt in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes factotum*, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country.' This was written in 1592, by which time Shakespeare had begun to be recognised as a successful author and actor. Of the earlier stages of his theatrical career little is definitely known. There is a legend to the effect that he was at first reduced to the necessity of holding horses at the doors of theatres, but this is not worthy of serious consideration. A man of such capacity and wit would be sure of a welcome and employment from the



managers of theatrical companies. Amongst his contemporaries were Richard Burbage, the greatest tragedian of the time ; Ben Jonson, Marlowe, and Robert Greene. Greene was a notable member of the company to which Shakespeare attached himself, and has already been referred to as the author of jealous and insulting words about the great dramatist. He was a native of Stratford, and it is thought that he may have been related to Shakespeare. As was common in those days, Shakespeare combined the two characters of actor and manager. The marvellous knowledge of stage-craft for which he was distinguished was doubtless gradually but rapidly acquired by him in the earlier years of his professional career. During that time he was engaged in the humble task of adapting old plays to the exigencies of his theatre. He was connected with theatrical life for twenty-five years in all (1586 to about 1611), a period which embraced the 'splendour of his youth and the vigour of his manhood.' His dramas, amounting to thirty-seven in all, and his poems, with possibly the one exception of *Venus and Adonis*, were written during this time. The date of composition of *Venus and Adonis* is uncertain.

*Venus and Adonis* was Shakespeare's first poem. It is not dramatic. It is dedicated to Lord Southampton, and is called by the poet (on the dedication page) 'the first heir of my invention.' It was published in 1593. It is a voluptuous and startling poem, but rich in description of 'country sights and sounds, of the ways of animals and birds, such as he saw when wandering in Charlcote Woods.'

It is impossible to ascertain with certainty the exact date of the original production of some of the plays of Shakespeare, but most historians have agreed upon a general scheme of classification, which, in its main features at least, may be considered trustworthy. The chronological method of arrangement is obviously the best to adopt. It enables us to trace the gradual and quick development of the poet's artistic and dramatic genius. The evidence on which the chronological order is based is very varied, but a sense of conviction is produced in the mind of the student by the compatibility and concurrence of the circumstances which are adduced as proofs. Of the tables we have read, the following by Dr. Dowden is the most concise :



1. PRE-SHAKESPEARIAN GROUP.
  - (a) *Touched by Shakespeare.*  
 Titus Andronicus (1588-1590).  
 1 Henry VI. (1590-1591).
  - (b) *Joyous, Refined, Romantic.*  
 Much Ado about Nothing (1598).  
 As You Like It (1599).  
 Twelfth Night (1600-1601).
  - (c) *Serious, Dark, Ironical.*  
 All's Well that Ends Well (? 1601-1602).  
 Measure for Measure (1603).  
 Troilus and Cressida (? 1603).  
 (Revised ? 1607.)
2. EARLY COMEDIES.  
 Love's Labour's Lost (1590).  
 Comedy of Errors (1591).  
 Two Gentlemen of Verona (1592-1593).  
 Midsummer Night's Dream (1593-1594).
3. MARLOWE-SHAKESPEARE GROUP.  
*Early History.*  
 2 and 3 Henry VI. (1591-1592).  
 Richard III. (1593).
4. EARLY TRAGEDY.  
 Romeo and Juliet (? two dates, 1591, 1596-1597).
5. MIDDLE HISTORY.  
 Richard II. (1594).  
 King John (1595).
6. MIDDLE COMEDY.  
 Merchant of Venice (1596).
7. LATER HISTORY.  
*History and Comedy united.*  
 1 and 2 Henry IV. (1597-1598).  
 Henry V. (1599).
8. LATER COMEDY.  
 (a) *Rough and Boisterous Comedy.*  
 Taming of the Shrew (? 1597).  
 Merry Wives of Windsor (? 1598).
9. MIDDLE TRAGEDY.  
 Julius Cæsar (1601).  
 Hamlet (1602).
10. LATER TRAGEDY.  
 Othello (1604).  
 Lear (1605).  
 Macbeth (1606).  
 Antony and Cleopatra (1607).  
 Coriolanus (1608).  
 Timon of Athens (1607-1608).
11. ROMANCES.  
 Pericles (1608).  
 Cymbeline (1609).  
 The Tempest (1610).  
 Winter's Tale (1610-1611).
12. FRAGMENTS.  
 Two Noble Kinsmen (1612).  
 Henry VIII. (1612-1613).
- POEMS.  
 Venus and Adonis (? 1592).  
 Lucrece (1593-1594).  
 Sonnets (? 1595-1605).

The most important facts about the quartos, the dates of the first editions, etc., are contained in this table, also compiled by Dr. Dowden :

1593. *Venus and Adonis* (before the end of 1630 eleven quarto editions had appeared).  
 1594 (?). An edition of *Titus Andronicus*, not now extant.  
*Lucrece* (before the end of 1624, six quartos).  
 1597. *Romeo and Juliet* (imperfect, pirated copy).  
 „ *Richard II.* (before the end of 1615, four quartos).  
 „ *Richard III.* (before the end of 1629, seven quartos).  
 1598. 1 *Henry IV.* (before the end of 1622, six quartos).  
 „ *Love's Labour's Lost* (with Shakespeare's name for the first time on a play).  
 1599. *Passionate Pilgrim* (third edition in 1612, but only two now extant).  
 „ *Romeo and Juliet* (perfect, republished in 1609 ; and again, undated).  
 1600. 2 *Henry IV.*



1600. *Midsummer Night's Dream* (two quartos in 1600, published (1) by Fishers, (2) by Roberts).  
 „ *Merchant of Venice* (two quartos in 1600; (1) Roberts, (2) Heyes).  
 „ *Much Ado about Nothing*.  
 „ *Titus Andronicus* (again in 1611).  
 „ *Henry V.* (imperfect, pirated copy; before end of 1608 three quartos of imperfect *Henry V.*).  
     [Shakespeare's name on all those of 1600, except *Titus Andronicus* and *Henry V.*]  
 1602. *Merry Wives of Windsor* (imperfect report of early form of the play; second quarto, 1619, with Shakespeare's name).  
 1603. *Hamlet* (imperfect report of first form of the play; with Shakespeare's name).  
 1604. *Hamlet* (later form; before the end of 1611 three quarto editions; with Shakespeare's name).  
 1608. *Lear* (two quartos in 1608, surreptitious (?); with Shakespeare's name).  
 1609. *Sonnets*.  
 „ *Troilus and Cressida* (two quartos in 1609, with Shakespeare's name)  
 „ *Pericles* (before the end of 1630 five quartos; with Shakespeare's name).  
 1622. *Othello* (second quarto, with alterations and corrections, in 1630).

It is difficult even to attempt to analyze the many phases of Shakespeare's poetical and dramatic genius and character. Nevertheless, he has been the subject of both praise and blame, censure and applause, drawn forth from varying tastes and different ages. Rymer sees in *Othello* only 'a bloody farce,' or 'a tragedy of a pocket-handkerchief.' Voltaire stigmatizes *Hamlet* as the work of 'a drunken savage.' On the other hand, we find Dr. Johnson eulogizing the following celebrated passage in which Dryden gives vent to his estimate of the great poet:

'He was the man who, of all modern and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of Nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily. When he describes anything you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning give him the greater commendation; he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read Nature; he looked inwards and found her there. I cannot say he is everywhere alike; yet were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clinches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when occasion is presented to him; no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets—

'Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.'



Dr. Johnson writes thus of Shakespeare's powers : ' Shakespeare is above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature ; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world ; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers ; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions ; they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual ; in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species.'

Scarcely less eulogistic are the words of Hallam, in his introduction to the *Literature of Europe*. He says : ' The name of Shakespeare is the greatest in our literature ; it is the greatest in all literature. No man ever came near him in the creative powers of the mind ; no man had ever such strength at once, and such variety of imagination. The number of characters in his plays is astonishingly great ; yet he never takes an abstract quality to embody it, scarcely perhaps a definite condition of manners, as Jonson does. Nor did he draw much from living models ; there is no manifest appearance of personal caricature in his comedies ; though in some slight traits of character this may not improbably have been the case. Compare him with Homer, the tragedies of Greece, the poets of Italy, Plautus, Cervantes, Molière, Addison, Le Sage, Fielding, Richardson, Scott, the romances of the elder or later schools ; one man has far more than surpassed them all. Others may have been as sublime ; others may have been more pathetic ; others may have equalled him in grace and purity of language, and have shunned some of his faults ; but the philosophy of Shakespeare, his intimate searching out of the human heart, whether in the gnomic form of sentence, or in the dramatic exhibition of character, is a gift peculiarly his own.'

It is customary to divide Shakespeare's literary life into four great periods. The beginning of the first period is uncertain to a year or two, depending as it must upon the questionable date of *Venus and Adonis*. But it may safely be put down as between



1591 and 1593. It lasted until 1596. The second period may be reckoned from 1596 to 1601. During this stage in his career the life of the poet underwent a change. He had prospered financially, grown famous, and become a social favourite. He could now count amongst his friends such powerful supporters as William Herbert (Lord Pembroke), and the Earls of Essex and Southampton. The tragic element now crept into his life, when he saw Pembroke banished from the Court, Essex sent to the scaffold, and Southampton to the Tower of London. Under the influence and spell of these and more personal troubles he turns from comedy to tragedy. His third period covers the years from 1601 to 1608. *Julius Cæsar*, it is thought, may have been in a measure inspired by the tragic fate of Essex. *Hamlet*, *Measure for Measure*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, *Timon of Athens*, all reflect the state of the poet's own mind during this dark time. The fourth period embraces the years from 1608 to 1613. His mind becomes more peaceful, less resentful of the calamities and ironies of life, and during this time he gives to the world *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, *Cymbeline*, and *Pericles*. *Henry VIII.* he wrote in collaboration with Fletcher, but whether he had much, or even anything, to do with the composition of Fletcher's *Two Noble Kinsmen* is said by critics like Mr. Stopford Brooke to be somewhat doubtful.

Writing of *King Lear* in a recent able article in *Harper's Magazine*, Mr. Swinburne says, somewhat characteristically : ' Among all its other great qualities, among all the many other attributes which mark it for ever as matchless among the works of man, it has this, above all, that it is the first great utterance of a cry from the heights and the depths of the human spirit on behalf of the outcasts of the world, on behalf of the social sufferer, clean or unclean, innocent or criminal, thrall or free. To satisfy the sense of righteousness, the craving for justice, as unknown and unimaginable by Dante as by Chaucer, a change must come upon the social scheme of things which shall make an end of the actual relations between the judge and the cut-purse, the beadle and the prostitute, the beggar and the King. All this could be uttered, could be prophesied, could be thundered from the English stage at the dawn of the seventeenth century. Were it within the power of omnipotence to create



a German or a Russian Shakespeare, could anything of the sort be whispered or muttered, or hinted, or suggested from the boards of a Russian or a German theatre at the dawn of the twentieth? When a Tolstoy or a Sudermann can do this, and can do it with impunity in success, it will be allowed that his country is not more than three centuries behind England in civilization and in freedom.'

The *Sonnets* of Shakespeare number 154 in all. Some are addressed to a youth of noble lineage, while others are intended for a woman of stained character. They are in a great measure expressions of the poet's own inner feelings, and are full of sentiment. Sorrow, devotion, misplaced affection, tenderness, grace, and moral reflection, all find a place in these beautiful compositions. The student who would make a special study of the *Sonnets* of Shakespeare could not do better than procure Dr. Dowden's edition of them, in which he will find a careful examination of the whole subject, and a résumé of the many theories connected with their origin and meaning.

William Shakespeare died on the 23rd of April, 1616. 'Shakespeare, Drayton, and Ben Jonson had a merry meeting, and, it seems, drank too hard, for Shakespeare died of a fever there contracted.' So wrote the Vicar of Stratford fifty years after. But this is not authenticated. The poet was buried in Stratford Church. His grave is covered by a flat stone, on which is written an epitaph attributed to his own pen :

Good frend, for Jesus sake forbear  
To digg the dust enclosed here  
Blese be the man that spares these stones  
And curst be he that moves my bones.

In an interesting article on 'Forged Literature' contributed to the *Nineteenth Century*, and quoted in our review of Chatterton, Mr. Hewlett tells us of the extraordinary forgery of Shakespearean MSS., by which William Henry Ireland (whether as principal or agent) succeeded in duping a distinguished circle of scholars and men of letters in 1795-1796. The MSS. themselves, not mere transcripts of them, were submitted to ocular inspection, and the success of the forgery was wonderful.

'Drs. Parr, Valpy, and Joseph Warton among scholars, George Chalmers and John Pinkerton among antiquaries, Sir Isaac Heard and Francis Townshend, professional heralds, and



Richard Brinsley Sheridan, James Boswell, and H. J. Pye (Poet Laureate), representative men of letters, were eager to avow their faith in the MSS. as indubitable autographs of Shakespeare, and bearing the unmistakable stamp of his genius. Granting that the antique aspect of sixteenth-century handwriting, parchment, ink, and seals was so skilfully imitated as to deceive the palæographers who examined the MSS., it remains inexplicable that a student so conversant with Elizabethan English as Chalmers could have been blind to the grotesque exaggerations of spelling which abound in every line of the text. Still more amazing appears the blindness which led Sheridan to accept the crude and tumid *Vortigern* as even a "youthful production" of the author of *Hamlet*, and to give Ireland £300 for the privilege of producing it at Drury Lane, besides half the profits of its representation for sixty nights. How John Kemble, who was forced to play the leading part, avenged the insult thus offered to the genius whose fame was linked with his own, need not be told afresh. In an *Inquiry into the Authenticity* of the MSS. which Malone, the most competent Shakespearian critic of the day, published soon after the collapse of *Vortigern*, he effectually established their spurious character by a minute collation of their language and spelling with those commonly employed in Elizabethan literature. The laboured attempt of Chalmers to adduce rebutting evidence was rendered futile by the prompt appearance of a pamphlet in which the forger, a young law-student, made an explicit confession of his fraud. Filial desire to gratify the taste of his father, an enthusiastic Shakespeare-worshipper, curiosity to see "how far credulity would go in the search for antiquities," and vanity, intoxicated by the success of his first deception, were the incentives which avowedly actuated him. In another confession, made shortly before his death in 1835, he recanted his former statement, and represented his father as having been the chief concocter of the forgery. Whoever was concerned in it evidently saw that the Shakespeare-idolatry which then prevailed in antiquarian and literary circles had reached the point of infatuation, and embraced the opportunity of turning it to profit.'

Dr. Johnson, in his preface to the works of Shakespeare, says: 'He that tries to recommend him by select quotations will succeed like the pedant in Hierocles, who, when he offered his



house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen.' We feel that this is not only witty, but true. Yet we append some specimens.

*FROM 'MEASURE FOR MEASURE'*

THE DUKE TO CLAUDIO

ACT III., SCENE I

Reason thus with life :  
 If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing  
 That none but fools would keep ; a breath thou art,  
 (Servile to all the skiey influences)  
 That do this habitation, where thou keep'st,  
 Hourly afflict ; merely, thou art death's fool ;  
 For him thou labour'st by thy flight to shun,  
 And yet run'st tow'rd him still. Thou art not noble ;  
 For all th' accommodations that thou bear'st  
 Are nurs'd by baseness : thou'rt by no means valiant ;  
 For thou dost fear the soft and tender fork  
 Of a poor worm. Thy best of rest is sleep,  
 And that thou oft provok'st ; yet grossly fear'st  
 Thy death, which is no more. Thou'rt not thyself ;  
 For thou exist'st on many a thousand grains  
 That issue out of dust. Happy thou art not ;  
 For what thou hast not, still thou striv'st to get ;  
 And what thou hast forget'st. Thou art not certain ;  
 For thy complexion shifts to strange effects,  
 After the moon. If thou art rich, thou'rt poor ;  
 For, like an ass, whose back with ingots bows,  
 Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,  
 And death unloadeth thee.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 Thou hast nor youth, nor age ;  
 But as it were an after-dinner sleep,  
 Dreaming on both ; for all thy blessed youth  
 Becomes as aged, and doth beg the alms  
 Of palsied eld ; and when thou'rt old and rich,  
 Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty,  
 To make thy riches pleasant. What's yet in this,  
 That bears the name of life ? Yet in this life  
 Lie hid more thousand deaths ; yet death we fear  
 That makes these odds all even.

*FROM 'THE MERCHANT OF VENICE'*

MERCY.—PORTIA TO SHYLOCK.

ACT IV., SCENE I

The quality of Mercy is not strain'd ;  
 It droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven,  
 Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed ;  
 It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.  
 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest ; it becomes  
 The throned monarch better than his crown.



His sceptre shews the force of temporal power,  
 The attribute to awe and majesty,  
 Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings ;  
 But mercy is above this sceptred sway ;  
 It is enthronèd in the heart of kings ;  
 It is an attribute to God Himself ;  
 And earthly power doth then shew likest God's  
 When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,  
 Though justice be thy plea, consider this—  
 That in the course of justice none of us  
 Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy ;  
 And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
 The deeds of mercy.

### FROM 'AS YOU LIKE IT'

#### THE EXILED DUKE'S PHILOSOPHY

##### ACT II., SCENE 1

Now, my co-mates,<sup>1</sup> and brothers in exile,  
 Hath not old custom made this life more sweet  
 Than that of painted pomp ? are not these woods  
 More free from peril than the envious court ?  
 Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,  
 The seasons' difference ; as the icy fang,  
 And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,  
 Which, when it bites and blows upon my body,  
 Even till I shrink with cold, I smile, and say,  
 ' This is no flattery ; these are counsellors  
 That feelingly persuade me what I am.'  
 Sweet are the uses of adversity,  
 Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
 Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.<sup>2</sup>  
 And this our life, exempt from public haunt,  
 Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
 Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

#### THE WORLD A STAGE

##### ACT II., SCENE 9

All the world's a stage,  
 And all the men and women merely players ;  
 They have their exits and their entrances,  
 And one man in his time plays many parts,  
 His acts being seven ages. At first—the Infant,  
 Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.  
 And then—the whining Schoolboy with his satchel,  
 And shining morning face, creeping like snail  
 Unwillingly to school. And then—the Lover,  
 Sighing like furnace, with a woful ballad  
 Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then—a Soldier,  
 Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard ;

<sup>1</sup> So Shakespeare coins *co-mart*, *Hamlet*, Act I., Scene I.—MALONE.

<sup>2</sup> A belief of Shakespeare's age.



Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel ;  
 Seeking the bubble reputation  
 Even in the cannon's mouth. And then—the Justice,  
 In fair round belly, with good capon lin'd,  
 With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,  
 Full of wise saws and modern instances ;  
 And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts  
 Into the lean and slipper'd Pantaloon,  
 With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side ;  
 His youthful hose well sav'd, a world too wide  
 For his shrunk shank ; and his big manly voice,  
 Turning again toward childish treble, pipes  
 And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,  
 That ends this strange eventful history,  
 Is second childishness, and mere oblivion,  
 Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

## FROM 'MACBETH'

## MACBETH'S MENTAL STRUGGLE

## ACT I., SCENE 7

*Macb.* If it were *done* when 'tis done, then 'twere well  
 It were done quickly ; if th' assassination  
 Could trammel up the consequence, and catch  
 With its surcease, success ;<sup>1</sup> that but this blow  
 Might be the be-all and the end-all here,  
 But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,—  
 We'd jump the life to come.—But, in these cases,  
 We still have judgment here, that we but teach  
 Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return  
 To plague th' inventor : this even-handed justice  
 Commends th' ingredients of our poison'd chalice  
 To our own lips. He's here in double trust ;  
 First, as I am his kinsman and his subject ;  
 Strong both against the deed : then, as his host,  
 Who should against his murd'rer shut the door,  
 Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan  
 Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been  
 So clear in his great office, that his virtues  
 Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongu'd, against  
 The deep damnation of his taking off ;  
 And pity, like a naked, new-born babe,  
 Striding the blast, or heav'n's cherubim, hors'd  
 Upon the sightless couriers of the air,  
 Shall blow the horrid deed in ev'ry eye,  
 That tears shall drown the wind.—I have no spurs  
 To prick the sides of my intent, but only  
 Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself,  
 And falls on th' other—

How now ? What news ?

*Lady M.* He has almost supp'd : why have you left the chamber ?

*Macb.* Hath he asked for me ?

*Lady M.* Know you not, he has ?

*Macb.* We will proceed no further in this business.

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<sup>1</sup> Johnson would read ' with its success, surcease.'



He hath honoured me of late ; and I have bought  
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,  
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,  
Not cast aside so soon.

*Lady M.* Was the hope drunk  
Wherein you dressed yourself ? Hath it slept since ?  
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale  
At what it did so freely ? From this time,  
Such I account thy love. Art thou afraid  
To be the same in thine own act and valour,  
As thou art in desire ? Wouldst thou have that  
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,  
And live a coward in thine own esteem ?  
Letting *I dare not* wait upon *I would*,  
Like the poor cat i' th' adage.<sup>1</sup>

*Macb.* Pr'ythee, peace:  
I dare do all that may become a man ;  
Who dares do more, is none.

### FROM 'HAMLET'

#### HAMLET'S SOLILOQUY ON DEATH

##### ACT III., SCENE I

To be, or not to be, that is the question :—  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune ;  
Or to take arms against a sea<sup>2</sup> of troubles,  
And, by opposing, end them ?—To die ?—to sleep—  
No more ; and, by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to !—'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die—to sleep—  
To sleep !—perchance to dream !—ay, there's the rub ;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause. There's the respect  
That makes Calamity of so long life :  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes ;  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin ? Who would fardels bear,  
To grunt<sup>3</sup> and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death—  
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Fain would the cat fish eat  
But she is loth to wet her feet.

<sup>2</sup> Another reading is *siege*. Sea, however, although it causes a mixed metaphor, is much more in accordance with Shakespeare's imagery.

<sup>3</sup> Modern delicacy reads 'groan.' '*Grunt* is undoubtedly the true reading, but can scarcely be borne by modern ears.'—JOHNSON.

<sup>4</sup> Boundary (Fr. *borner*) streams frequently act in this capacity. The word *burn*, in Scotch, means a rivulet.



No traveller returns,—puzzles the will ;  
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have,  
 Than fly to others that we know not of ?  
 Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all ;  
 And thus the native hue of resolution  
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought ;  
 And enterprises of great pith and moment,  
 With this regard, their currents turn awry,  
 And lose the name of action.

FROM 'AS YOU LIKE IT'

AMIEN'S SONG

ACT II., SCENE 7

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,  
 Thou art not so unkind  
     As man's ingratitude ;  
 Thy tooth is not so keen,  
 Because thou art not seen,  
     Although thy breath be rude.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,  
 That dost not bite so nigh  
     As benefits forgot :  
 Though thou the waters warp,  
 Thy sting is not so sharp  
     As friend remember'd not.

FROM 'A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

FEMALE FRIENDSHIP

ACT III., SCENE 2

Is all the counsel that we two have shared,  
 The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,  
 When we have chid the hasty-footed time  
 For parting us ; O ! and is all forgot—  
 All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence ?  
 We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,  
 Have with our needles<sup>1</sup> created both one flower,  
 Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,  
 Both warbling of one song, both in one key ;  
 As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds  
 Had been incorporate. So we grew together,  
 Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,  
 But yet an union in partition ;  
 Two lovely berries moulded on one stem :  
 So with two seeming bodies, but one heart.

A SONNET (CXLVI.)

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,  
 Press'd by<sup>2</sup> those rebel powers that thee array,  
 Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,  
 Painting thy outward walls so costly gay ?

<sup>1</sup> Needles.

<sup>2</sup> This is Dr. Dowden's reading. Steevens suggests *Starv'd by*. Malone says it should be *Fool'd by*.



Why so large cost, having so short a lease,  
 Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend ?  
 Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,  
 Eat up thy charge ? Is this thy body's end ?  
 Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,  
 And let that pine to aggravate<sup>1</sup> thy store.  
 Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross ;  
 Within be fed,—without be rich no more.  
 So shalt thou feed on death, that feeds on men ;  
 And, death once dead, there's no more dying then.

## HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY

1516-1547

THE name of the Earl of Surrey, son of the third Duke of Norfolk, occupies a conspicuous and honourable place amongst the English poets of the sixteenth century. He was a soldier of great bravery, a nobleman of many accomplishments, and 'a poet whose compositions, though few in number, and limited in the subjects of which they treat, exercised a marked influence on the intellectual character of the age.' His early history is involved in obscurity. Dr. Nott, the best of his biographers, says he was educated at Cambridge, and that he was afterwards elected High Steward of that University. Another biographer, Wood, asserts that he was for a time at Oxford. It seems certain, however, that at the early age of sixteen he married Lady Frances Vere, daughter of John, Earl of Oxford. In Southey's *Select Works of the English Poets* we find interesting particulars about the life and character of Surrey. It says :

'In the year of his marriage, he was one of the nobles who accompanied Henry VIII. to his interview with the French King at Boulogne ; and at the coronation of Anne Boleyn, he carried the fourth sword, with the scabbard, upright, before the King, as representative of his father-in-law, the Lord High Chamberlain. He lived in the closest intimacy with Henry's natural son, the Duke of Richmond, who was at that time betrothed to his only sister, the Lady Mary Howard, and some of his happiest days were spent with this friend at Windsor. That was an age in which a dear price was paid for pre-eminence in rank. Anne Boleyn was his kinswoman and friend ; yet Surrey was compelled to appear at her iniquitous trial, as representing his

<sup>1</sup> Increase.



father in the character of Earl Marshal; the Duke in his own person presiding as Lord High Steward. He was one of the chief mourners at the funeral of Queen Jane, and one of the defendants in the jousts upon the marriage of Queen Anne of Cleves. Soon afterwards he was made Knight of the Garter. This was the season of his highest favour. It was followed by disgrace and imprisonment for having challenged John à Leigh, of Stockwell, upon a private quarrel. On his release he accompanied his father to the war in Scotland, and was present when Kelsal was burnt. He had then to answer before the Privy Council upon two charges: the one was for eating meat in Lent; the other for breaking windows in the streets of London with a cross-bow at the dead of night. For the first he pleaded a license, but confessed that he had made use of it too publicly; for the second he made the strange excuse, that being shocked at the licentiousness of the citizens, he thought that by thus alarming them he might put them in mind of the suddenness of God's judgments, and so awaken them to repentance. Wyatt was one of his companions in this freak of fanaticism, and they were both committed to the Fleet for it.'

This young nobleman is said to have been fascinating and accomplished, full of courage and spirit, ambitious of display, and yet preferring, as has been said by another writer, 'the nobility of his nature to that of his fortune.' He is further described as an enthusiastic friend, a knight after the model of the knights of old, undaunted and incorruptible, first in the lists and graceful in the dance; a munificent patron of the fine arts and of literature, and a liberal and beneficent helper of any brother poet who appealed to him in distress. He was not envious of greater fame in others, though he had a proud spirit and a quick temper.

We next find him at the siege of Landrecy. Bonner had invited Hadrian Junius to England, but when the distinguished scholar arrived, Bonner was unable to assist him, and Surrey took him into his household as physician, and 'gave him a pension of fifty angels.' He gave further proof of his earnestness as a patron of letters by receiving Churchyard, then a promising boy, into his service. He was Marshal of the army in 1544, conducted the siege of Montreuil, and had the command at Guisnes and at Boulogne. Through the jealousy of Lord Hertford



he was removed from the last-mentioned charge in 1546, and, on giving vent to his feelings in characteristically strong language, he was imprisoned in Windsor Castle. In August of the same year he was set free, but in the following December he was sent to the Tower of London on a false charge of high treason, in which his father, the Duke of Norfolk, was also involved. This was in the days when, as Dr. Collier points out, 'Bluff King Hal' had become 'Bloated King Hal,' and all the courtly circle saw that the huge heap of wickedness was sinking into the grave.

At that time there was a keen contest between the two great houses of Howard and Seymour. The Howards were Roman Catholics, and the Earl of Hertford, the head of the Seymours, was in secret sympathy with the Reformers. Hertford's ambition was to secure the Protectorship of his nephew, Prince Edward, on the death of the King. But the chief obstacles, Norfolk and Surrey, must be removed. 'The thing was easy to do; the name of Howard was poison to the King, who had already soiled their proud escutcheon with an ugly smear of blood, drawn from the fair neck of his fifth wife.'

Surrey was tried at the Guildhall. It was laid to his charge that he had quartered the arms of Edward the Confessor on his shield with those of his own family. In vain did he point out the fact that he had long worn these arms, even in the King's own sight, and that it was his right to do so by reason of his royal descent. He was condemned as a would-be usurper of the throne, and about a week afterwards, on the 19th of January, 1547, 'his bright hair, all dabbled in blood, swept the dust of the scaffold.' The Duke, his father, was condemned to suffer a like penalty on the 29th of the same month, but the death of Henry, which occurred on the 28th, saved him from such an ignominious end, and, after remaining in prison for some years, he was restored to liberty. One of the most painful features of Surrey's trial lay in the fact that his only sister, the widow of his dearest friend, appeared voluntarily as a witness, to take away the lives of her father and brother.

The name of Surrey is a notable one in the annals of English verse, he being conspicuous for originality as well as for genius. So far as can be ascertained with certainty, he was the earliest writer of English blank verse, and also one of the first writers of English sonnets. He unquestionably did much to raise the



style and tone of poetry in his day. His works are not very numerous, it is true. They consist of *Songs and Sonnets*, in a collection published in London [by Tottel] in 1557; the second and fourth books of *Virgil's Æneid*, translated into blank verse, London, 1557; a translation of *Ecclesiastes and some of the Psalms*; *Satires on the Citizens of London*; a translation from *Boccaccio*; and some smaller pieces. The entire works of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and those of Sir Thomas Wyatt, were published, with notes and memoirs, by Dr. Nott, 2 vols., 4to., 1816. The poem which is generally considered his best was written during his imprisonment at Windsor Castle. 'It consists of recollections of his early youth; it has all the graces of his early spirit, without the pride. It combines the three best features of his character, personal and poetical: his tender spirit of friendship, his taste for knightly gallantry, and his powers of description.' Between the death of Chaucer and the golden reign of Elizabeth there was a dearth of poets who might be called great. Civil wars and reverses of fortune had undermined society, and disturbed the smooth current of affairs, and though Gower, Lydgate, Skelton, and a few others followed Chaucer, yet for nearly a century there was no very distinguished writer of English poetry until, in 1557, the works of Wyatt and Surrey appeared. Following the example of Chaucer, he drew much of his inspiration from the Italian school, making an especial study of Petrarch.

'Surrey,' says Campbell, 'was not the inventor of our metrical versification; nor had his genius the potent voice and magic spell which rouse all the dormant energies of a language. In certain walks of composition, though not in the highest—viz., in the ode, elegy, and epitaph—he set a chaste and delicate example; but he was cut off too early in life, and cultivated poetry too slightly, to carry the pure stream of his style into the broad and bold channels of inventive fiction. Much, undoubtedly, he did, in giving sweetness to our numbers, and in substituting for the rude tautology of a former age a style of soft and brilliant ornament, of selected expression, and of verbal arrangement, which often winds into graceful novelties, though sometimes a little objectionable from its involution.'

There is one passage in the eventful and romantic history of this meteoric poet which Dr. Collier paints for us with charac-



teristic delicacy of feeling. 'The poems of Petrarch,' he says, 'ring the changes in exquisite music on his love for Laura. So the love-verses of Surrey are filled with the praises of the fair Geraldine, whom Horace Walpole has tried to identify with Lady Elizabeth FitzGerald, a daughter of the Earl of Kildare. If this be so, Geraldine was only a girl of thirteen when the poet, already married to Lady Frances Vere for six years, sang of her beauty and her virtue. It is no unlikely thing that Surrey, an instinctive lover of the beautiful, was smitten with a deep admiration of the fresh, young, girlish face of one—

Standing with reluctant feet,  
Where the brook and river meet,  
Womanhood and childhood fleet.

Such a feeling could exist—it often has existed—in the poet's breast, free from all mingling of sin, and casting no shadow of reproach upon a husband's loyalty.'

We append a specimen of Surrey's blank verse, from his translation of the Second Book of the *Æneid* :

It was the time when, granted from the gods,  
The first sleep creeps most sweet in weary folk  
Lo, in my dream before mine eyes, methought  
With rueful cheer I saw where Hector stood  
(Out of whose eyes there gushed streams of tears),  
Drawn at a car as he of late had been,  
Distained with bloody dust, whose feet were bowl'n<sup>1</sup>  
With the strait cords wherewith they haled him.  
Ay me, what one ? That Hector how unlike  
Which erst returned clad with Achilles' spoils,  
Or when he threw into the Greekish ships  
The Trojan flame !—So was his beard defiled,  
His crisped locks all clustered with his blood.  
With all such wounds as many he received  
About the walls of that his native town.

The following are two of Surrey's Sonnets :

IN PRAISE OF GERALDINE, DAUGHTER OF THE EARL  
OF KILDARE

From Tuskane came my ladie's worthy race ;  
Fair Florence was some tyme her auncent seate ;  
The western yle,<sup>2</sup> whose pleasaunt shore doth face  
Wild Camber's<sup>3</sup> cliffs, did give her lively heate ;  
Fostered she was with milke of Irishe brest ;  
Her sire an Erle ; her dame of princes' blood.  
From tender yeres in Britain she doth rest,  
With Kinges child,<sup>4</sup> where she tasteth costly food.

<sup>1</sup> The participle of the Saxon verb to *bolge*, which gives the derivation of *bulge*.—TYRWITT'S *Chaucer*.

<sup>2</sup> Ireland.

<sup>3</sup> Cambria, Wales.

<sup>4</sup> Princess Mary.



Hondson did first present her to mine eyne;  
 Bright is her hewe, and Geraldine she hight.  
 Hampton me taught to wish her first for mine;  
 And Windsor, alas, doth chase me from her sight.  
 Her beauty of kind, her vertues from above—  
 Happy is he that can obtain her love.

## SONNET ON SPRING

The sweet season that bud and bloom forth brings,  
 With green hath clad the hill and eke the vale;  
 The nightingale with feathers new she sings;  
 The turtle to her mate hath told her tale.  
 Summer is come, for every spray now springs,  
 The hart hath hung his old head on the pale,  
 The buck in brake his winter coat he flings,  
 The fishes fleet with new-repaired scale.  
 The adder all her slough away she flings,  
 The swift swallow pursues the flies small,  
 The busy bee her honey now she wings,  
 Winter is worn that was the flower's bale.  
 And thus I see, among those pleasant things,  
 Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs.

We close with two specimens of Surrey's lighter verse:

## THE MEANS TO ATTAIN A HAPPY LIFE

Martial, the things that do attain  
 The happy life, be these, I find:  
 The riches left, not got with pain;  
 The fruitful ground, the quiet mind,  
 The equal friend; no grudge, no strife;  
 No charge of rule, nor governance;  
 Without disease, the healthful life;  
 The household of continuance;  
 The mean diet, no delicate fare;  
 True wisdom joined with simpleness;  
 The night discharged of all care;  
 Where wine the wit may not oppress.  
 The faithful wife, without debate;  
 Such sleeps as may beguile the night;  
 Contented with thine own estate,  
 Ne wish for death, ne fear his might.

## BEAUTIES OF THE MORNING

The sun, when he hath spread his rays,  
 And shew'd his face ten thousand ways,  
 Ten thousand things do then begin  
 To shew the life that they are in.  
 The heaven shews lively art and hue,  
 Of sundry shapes and colours new,  
 And laughs upon the earth; anon,  
 The earth as cold as any stone,  
 Wet in the tears of her own kind,  
 'Gins then to take a joyful mind.



For well she feels that out and out,  
 The sun doth warm her round about,  
 And dries her children tenderly ;  
 And shews them forth full orderly :  
 The mountains high, and how they stand !  
 The valleys, and the great mainland !  
 The trees, the herbs, the towers strong,  
 The castles, and the rivers long.  
 The hunter then sounds out his horn,  
 And rangeth straight through wood and corn.  
 On hills then shew the ewe and lamb,  
 And every young one with his dam,  
 Then tune the birds their harmony ;  
 Then flock the fowl in company ;  
 Then everything doth pleasure find  
 In that, that comforts all their kind.

## SIR THOMAS WYATT

1503-1542

THE name of Sir Thomas Wyatt is generally coupled in histories of English literature with that of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, their *Songs and Sonnettes* having been published in June, 1557, in a collection which has since been called *Tottel's Miscellany*. Wyatt was descended from an ancient and illustrious family. He was born at Allington Castle, in Kent. After completing his education at St. John's College, Cambridge, he obtained a place at Court, where his noble person, his polished manners, his commanding talents, and his feats in arms, soon raised him to a conspicuous position, and obtained for him the favour of King Henry VIII. His poetical powers early developed themselves in sonnets and odes addressed to the Court beauties, especially the unfortunate Anne Boleyn. He was married at a very early age to a daughter of Lord Cobham, and, in 1537, was sent as Ambassador to the Court of Spain. He is said to have been greatly instrumental in furthering the Reformation by his private influence on the mind of King Henry.

To Wyatt's merits as a poet the highest praise that can be given is that he was Surrey's coadjutor in reforming English poetry. He is superior to his illustrious friend in masculine power, but he wants the graceful fancy, the easy flow, the melancholy sweetness, and, above all, the exquisite good taste which characterize 'Surrey's deathless lay.'

Of the collection of poems above mentioned, forty are attri-



buted to Wyatt and ninety-six to Surrey. It is part of Wyatt's glory to have introduced the sonnet into the English language. Some historians give the credit to Surrey, but the confusion of thought is as easily excused as accounted for. Mr. Chambers, in his latest edition of the *Cyclopædia of English Literature*, gives the best account yet published of the distinction between the relative works of these two poets. Speaking of Wyatt's introduction of the sonnet into our language, he says : ' It is not by his ten imitations of Petrarch, or his own essays on the same lines, that his contribution to our literature may most fairly be judged. His real innovation was the revival of that lyrical mood which had produced some charming snatches of English verse in the thirteenth century, and had then died away, even Chaucer having but a faint touch of it. In Wyatt it is predominant.' Again, he says : ' In turning from Wyatt to Surrey, it is usual to contrast the smoothness and finish of the younger with the crabbedness of the elder. If we look only to their sonnets, the contrast is obvious enough, for Surrey had the wit to invent that spurious but effective form of three quatrains and a couplet—a metre in which smoothness is lightly attained—and easily surpasses Wyatt in these poems.' The form invented by Surrey is that which was subsequently adopted by Shakespeare, and by many other sonneteers who have fought shy of the greater difficulties imposed by the restrictions of the pure Italian form of the sonnet proper, as cultivated by Petrarca and his imitators.

#### FROM ONE OF WYATT'S LYRICS

Forget not yet the tried intent  
 Of such a truth as I have meant :  
 My great travail so gladly spent,  
     Forget not yet !  
 Forget not yet when first began  
 The weary life ye know, since when  
 The suit, the service non tell can  
     Forget not yet !  
 Forget not yet the great assays,  
 The cruel wrong, the scornful ways,  
 The painful patience in delays,  
     Forget not yet !  
 Forget not, oh forget not this,  
 How long ago hath been, and is  
 The mind that never meant amiss.  
     Forget not yet !  
 Forget not yet thine own approv'd,  
 The which so long hath thee so lov'd,  
 Whose steadfast faith hath never mov'd  
     Forget not this !



## MINOR POETS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

## ENGLISH POETS

*Stephen Hawes* (flourished in 1506) is spoken of by Warton as 'the only writer deserving the name of a poet in the reign of Henry VII.' He was the author of *The Pastime of Pleasure, or the Historie of Grande Amour and La Bel Pucel*, which was dedicated to the King. It was written in 1506, but was not published until 1517, when it was printed by Wynkyn de Worde, the successor of Caxton. It reached a second edition in 1554, and a third in 1555. The poem is a long one, and 'in many passages a striking allegorical poem in the versification of old Lydgate.' It possesses many passages which display considerable power. The following verses are from a striking description of the Temple of Mars :

Beside this tower of old foundation  
 There was a temple strongly edified,  
 To the high honour and reputation  
 Of the mighty Mars it was so fortified ;  
 And for to know what it signified  
 I entered in, and saw of gold so pure  
 Of worthy Mars the marvellous picture.  
 \* \* \* \* \*

O prince of honour and of worthy fame !  
 O noble knights of old antiquity !  
 O redoubted courage, the causer of their name,  
 Whose worthy acts Fame caused to be  
 In books written, as ye well may see—  
 So give me grace right well to recure  
 The power of fame that shall so long endure.

*Alexander Barklay* (died in 1552) was the author of the *Ship of Fools*, a translation from the German of Brandt. It was printed in 1509. It is a satire. Brandt was a learned civilian of Basel, who published a satire in German bearing the same title in the year 1494. Barclay (or Barklay) is accounted an improver of the English language, though it must be confessed that his fools and their folly are a little monotonous and wearisome. A beautiful edition of this work was edited in 1874 by the late Thomas H. Jamieson, of the Advocates' Library, illustrated with facsimiles of the original woodcuts. It is the opinion



of that gentleman that the poet was born 'beyond the cold river of Tweed,' which would imply that he was a Scottish poet. He further fixes the date of Barclay's birth as in or about the year 1476, but there is an element of uncertainty about all this. There is good reason for believing, however, that he was a student at the University of Cambridge, and, taking Holy Orders, became Chaplain of St. Mary Ottery, in Devonshire, having travelled abroad for some time. He also published five *Eclogues*, three of which are paraphrases from Pope Pius II. (*Æneas Sylvius*), who died in 1464. Two others are imitations of Jo Baptist Mantuan. Barclay was the author of a number of proverbial sayings which are still in common use—for example :

When the stede is stolyn to shyte the stable dore.

A crowe to pull.

They robbe St. Peter therwith to clothe St. Powle.

For children brent still after drede the fire.

Better is a frende in courte than a peny in purse.

Barclay died at Croydon, at an advanced age. He speaks of that place as one which was familiar to him in early days :

While I in youth in Croiden towne did dwell.

*Queen Elizabeth* (1533-1603) was one of the most learned and accomplished women of the age to which she has bequeathed her name. When the pupil of Roger Ascham, she 'could speak Latin easily, Greek moderately well, and French and Italian as perfectly as English.' She translated Boëthius and Sallust. Her poetry was rather extravagantly praised in her own time, but even in the light of more sober judgment and maturer criticism they are readable enough, and bear comparison with the works of many of our respectable minor poets. When, during the reign of Mary, she was imprisoned in the gatehouse at Woodstock, she wrote the following lines on the shutter with a piece of charcoal :

Oh, Fortune, how thy restless wavering state

Hath wrought with care my troubled wit,

Witness the present prison whither fate

Could bear me and the joys I quit.

Thou caus'dst the guilty to be loosed

From bonds wherein an innocent enclosed,

Causing the guiltless to be strait reserved

And freeing those that death hath well deserved.

But by her envy can be nothing wrought.

So God send to my foes all they have wrought.'

*Quoth Elizabeth, Prisoner.*



Mr. Chambers, in the most recent edition of his *Cyclopædia of English Literature*, says: 'Bishop Creighton accepts as probably genuine the famous impromptu made when her sister, the Queen, caused her to be plied with questions about her belief in Transubstantiation:

'He was the Word that spake it;  
He took the bread, and brake it;  
And what that Word did make it,  
I do believe and take it.'

But the passage, if the best authorities until now have not been greatly mistaken, was a quotation from the *Divine Poems* of Dr. John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's.

It may be fairly said that the Princess Elizabeth was precocious, and displayed her literary leanings at a tender age. We are indebted to the Royal Society of Literature for a reproduction in facsimile of *The Mirror of the Sinful Soul, a prose translation of a poem written in French by Queen Margaret of Navarre, made in 1544 by the Princess (afterwards Queen) Elizabeth, then eleven years of age*. It is quite evident that the manuscript was written by the Princess's own hand, not merely from what she says in the dedication, but from a comparison with other specimens of her writing at the same age to be seen in the British Museum.

The Queen's best-known poem is a 'ditty of her Majesty's own making, passing sweet and harmonical,' which is found in Puttenham's *Art of English Poesy* (1589). It has been wrongly called a sonnet, but the fallacy of that is obvious:

#### VERSES BY QUEEN ELIZABETH

The doubt of future foes exiles my present joy,  
And wit me warnes to shun such snares as threaten mine annoy.  
For falsehood now doth flow, and subject faith doth ebb,  
Which would not be, if reason rul'd or wisdom wev'd the webbe.  
But cloudes of tois untried do cloake aspiring mindes,  
Which turn to raigne of late repent, by course of changed windes.  
The toppe of hope supposed, the roote of ruth will be,  
And fruitless all their graffed guiles, as shortly ye shall see.  
Then dazeld eyes with pride, which great ambition blinds,  
Shall be unseeld by worthy wights, whose foresight falsehood finds,  
The daughter of debate, that eke discord doth sowe,  
Shall reap no gaine where former rule hath taught stil peace to growe.  
No forreine bannisht wight shall ancre in this port,  
Our realme it brookes no strangers force, let them elsewhere resort.  
Our rusty sworde with rest shall first his edge employ  
To polle their toppes that seeke such change and gape for future joy.



Of this poem Puttenham says that it refers to the Queen's alarm at the intrigues of Mary Queen of Scots—'The Daughter of Debate.' It is thought it must have been written after the execution of Norfolk.

*Samuel Daniel* (1562-1619) was a prolific writer. His chief work is a *History of the Civil Wars*, a poem on the Wars of the Roses. It is in eight parts, or books, and was published in 1604. Another work of considerable merit is entitled *Musophilus, containing a General Defence of Learning*. He also wrote dramas, masques, Sonnets, and Epistles. His *Epistle to the Countess of Cumberland* is a poem of much merit. Coleridge, writing to Charles Lamb, says of him that he was 'gravely sober on all ordinary affairs, and not easily excited by any, yet there is one on which his blood boils—whenever he speaks of English valour exerted against a foreign enemy.'

Daniel was the son of a music-master, and was born near Taunton. He entered Magdalen Hall, Oxford, but left without taking a degree. He was Master of the Queen's Revels in the reign of James I., and was a friend of Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Chapman.

*Michael Drayton* (1563-1631), a voluminous writer, was born, it is thought, at Atherstone, in Warwickshire, but his early history is involved in doubt. He published a collection of Pastorals in 1593, and in 1598 appeared *The Barons' Wars* and *England's Heroical Epistles*. In the former he gives a description of the chief incidents of the unfortunate reign of Edward II., and in the latter 'a kind of adaptation of the plan of Ovid to English annals.' In 1612 he published the first part of *Polyolbion*, the second part appearing in 1622. It is an elaborate work, 'entirely unlike any other in English poetry, both in its subject and in the manner of its composition.' It is a minute and accurate itinerary of the whole of England and Wales, written in long rhymed verse, each line containing twelve syllables. Copious notes are added to the work, partly by Selden. In 1627 he published *The Battle of Agincourt*, *The Court of Faerie*, and other poems, and *The Muses' Elysium* in 1630. There are many gems of poesy in these various publications. Drayton was buried in Westminster Abbey, and a monument erected to his memory by Anne Clifford, Countess of Pembroke and Montgomery.



Sir John Davies (1570-1626) was an English barrister, who was Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, and Speaker of the Irish House of Commons. He was the author of two remarkable poems, 'on subjects so widely different that their juxtaposition excites almost a feeling of ludicrous paradox.' One is a lengthy philosophical treatise on *The Soul of Man and the Immortality thereof*, one of the first poems of the kind in the language. It was published in 1599, and is written in four-lined stanzas of heroic lines. The other poem is entitled *Orchestra, or a Poem of Dancing, in a Dialogue between Penelope and one of her Wooers*. It is written in a stanza of seven lines, peculiarly constructed. The poet represents the heroine as refusing to dance with her lover, who thereupon delivers a lecture on the antiquity of the art of dancing, 'in verses partaking of the flexibility and grace of the subject.' One verse will amply suffice as an example of the graceful style of the poet :

And thou, sweet Music, dancing's only life,  
The ear's sole happiness, the air's best speech,  
Loadstone of fellowship, charming rod of strife,  
The soft mind's paradise, the sick mind's leech,  
With thine own tongue thou trees and stones canst teach,  
That when the air doth dance her finest measure,  
Then art thou born, the gods' and men's sweet pleasure.

Thomas Tusser (1515?-1580) was a native of Rivenhall, in Essex. He was educated at Cambridge, and was attached to the Court for two years. He subsequently retired to the country, and took a farm in Sussex. His patron at Court was William, Lord Paget. Having tired of farming, he joined the choir of Norwich Cathedral, was, it is said, for a time a fiddler, and died in poverty in London in 1580. He is celebrated as being the author of the first didactic poem in the English language. His work, published in 1557, is entitled *A Hondreth Good Points of Husbandrie*. It went through several editions, and was published in an improved and enlarged form in 1577, under the title of *Five Hondreth Points of Good Husbandrie, united to as many of Good Wiferie*.

Thomas, Lord Vaux, was born about the year 1510. He held the office of Captain of the Isle of Jersey in the reign of Henry VIII. His poems were published in *Tottel's Miscellany*. There are also thirteen poems by this author in another collection called *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*, the date of which is 1576. He



is described by Puttenham in his 'Art of Poesie' as 'a man of much facility in vulgar makings.' He died in the reign of Queen Mary.

*Nicholas Grimoald* (1520-1563) was a Professor of Rhetoric in the University of Oxford. Under the initials 'N. G.' he contributed poems to *Tottel's Miscellany*. A very learned man, he translated some of the Greek and Latin classics into English. He was born about the year 1520, and died in 1563. Besides a number of smaller poems, he wrote, in blank verse, two translations from the Latin of Philip Gaultier and Beza.

*Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst* (1527-1608).—This poet, who was born in the year 1527, was 'the herald of that splendour in which Elizabeth's glorious reign was destined to close.' He was a Master of Arts of the University of Cambridge, and studied law at the Inner Temple. On two occasions he went abroad in the capacity of Ambassador, and later in life he held the important office of High Steward. He was commissioned to break the sad news of her fate to Mary Queen of Scots. His play called *Gorboduc*, written in collaboration with Thomas Norton, was the first English tragedy. He also commemorated in majestic verse the greatness and ultimate downfall of the Duke of Buckingham. He is said to have designed a great poem called *The Mirrour for Magistrates* towards the end of the reign of Queen Mary. The first edition of this work was published in 1559, the authors being Richard Baldwin and George Ferrers. In a second edition, which was published in 1563, was an *Induction*, or *Introduction*, by Sackville, which bears comparison with some of the work of Chaucer.

*John Harrington* (1534-1582) wrote 'some pleasing amatory verses,' which were published in the *Nugæ Antiquæ*. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London by Queen Mary for holding correspondence with Queen Elizabeth.

*Arthur Brooke* was the author of *The Tragical History of Romeo and Juliet*, a loose translation from the Italian of Bandello. It was from this poem that Shakespeare obtained the plot of his play. Brooke was lost in a ship which perished off Newhaven about the year 1563.



George Gascoigne has been classed as ranking next to Lord Buckhurst amongst poets of the earlier years of the reign of Elizabeth. Three of his works are to be found in *Arber's Reprints* (1868). These are *Certayne Notes of Instruction in English Verse*, 1575; *The Steele Glass*, 1576; and *The Complaynt of Philomene*, 1576. Of these, *The Steele Glass* is the first example of English satire in blank verse. Gascoigne's dates are, as nearly as can be estimated, from 1535 to 1577.

Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586) cannot be accounted a notable poet. It has been said of him that he was almost the *beau idéal* of the courtier, the soldier, and the scholar. He was chiefly celebrated as a writer of prose, but his Sonnets are 'remarkable for their somewhat languid and refined elegance.' He also wrote a small tract called *A Defence of Poesy*. Of his poetical talent it has been remarked that 'if he had looked into his own noble heart, and written directly from that, instead of from his somewhat too metaphysico-philosophical head, his poetry would have been excellent.'

Robert Southwell (1560-1595) was a Roman Catholic, who became a Jesuit in 1576, at the age of sixteen. He was born at St. Faith's, Norfolk, in 1560. Educated in Flanders and Rome, he came back to England as a missionary, but was committed to the Tower of London in 1592, and executed at Tyburn in 1595, for high treason. In prison he wrote *St. Peter's Complaint* and *Mary Magdalene's Funeral Tears*, which ran through eleven editions. His shorter poems are accounted the best. All his poems are remarkable for the piety of their tone and the patient spirit of resignation which pervades them.

William Warner (1558-1609) was a native of Oxfordshire and an attorney attached to the Court of Common Pleas. He wrote a history in rhyme, entitled *Albion's England*. Though it is said to have rivalled the *Mirror for Magistrates* in its own day, it is now only to be accounted monotonous and uninteresting. It is written in fourteen-syllable verse, and is a history of England from the Deluge to the reign of James I. He died suddenly at Amwell, in Hertfordshire, in March, 1609.

Sir John Harrington (1561-1612) is celebrated as the first writer to translate Ariosto into English. He was the son of the John Harrington already mentioned in this history.



*Edward Vere, Earl of Oxford* (circa 1540–1604), was a contributor to the miscellany known as *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*. It is said of this poet that ‘he was the first that brought from Italy embroidered gloves and perfumes, which Elizabeth no doubt approved of as highly as his sonnets or madrigals.’

*Sir Edward Dyer* (circa 1540–1607) was the author of a popular poem entitled *My Mind to Me a Kingdom is* and other verses.

*Thomas Storer* was born in London, but the exact date of his birth is not known. He entered Christ Church, Oxford, in 1587, and took the degree of Master of Arts in 1594. He was a contributor of pastoral airs and madrigals to *England's Helicon*. His *Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey* is said to have influenced Shakespeare in the design and composition of his play *King Henry VIII*. He died in 1604.

*William Hunnis* is to be remembered as a contributor to the *Paradise of Dainty Devices*. Mr. Shaw places him third in order of merit amongst the contributors, ranking after Richard Edwards and Lord Vaux. Hunnis was one of the gentlemen of Queen Elizabeth's chapel; he also wrote some moral and religious poems printed separately. He died in 1568.

*Thomas Churchyard* (1520–1604) was a soldier who served under three Sovereigns—Henry VIII., Mary, and Elizabeth. He wrote about seventy volumes of prose and poetry. He is thought to have been the Palamon of Spenser's *Colin Clout*

That sang so long until quite hoarse he grew.

Churchyard had a chequered career, and was rewarded for his military service by a pension of eighteenpence a day, ‘not paid regularly,’ from Queen Elizabeth, to whom he had dedicated some of his poems. Disraeli says of him that he was ‘one of those unfortunate men who have written poetry all their days, and lived a long life to complete the misfortune.’

*George Turberville* (circa 1530–1594) was a writer of songs and sonnets. He was Secretary to Randolph, Ambassador at the Court of Russia in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. ‘He very frequently employed a peculiar modification of the old English ballad stanza, which was extremely fashionable at this period.



The modification consists in the third line, instead of being of equal length to the first, containing eight.' His poems consist chiefly of love epistles, epitaphs, and complimentary verses.

*Henry Constable* (circa 1560-1612) published a large number of sonnets under the assumed name of *Diana*. He is supposed by historians to have been the same Henry Constable who was banished from his country for his advocacy of the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church.

*Thomas Watson* (circa 1557-1592) was the author of a number of Sonnets, published under the general title of *Hecatompethia, or Passionate Century of Love*. These sonnets are of superior merit, and were greatly admired.

*Nicholas Breton* (1558-1624) is said to have been the son of Captain Nicholas Breton, of Tamworth. He was a contributor of poetical pieces to *England's Helicon*, a poetical miscellany published in 1600. Very little is known of his personal history. He published *Works of a Young Wit* in 1577. The following lines are from *A Pastoral* :

On a hill there grows a flower,  
Fair befall the dainty sweet !  
By that flower there is a bower  
Where the heavenly Muses meet.

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*Christopher Marlowe* (1564-1593) was, according to Mr. Shaw, 'by far the most powerful genius among the dramatic poets who immediately preceded Shakespeare.' He was born at Canterbury in 1563, and received his education at the University of Cambridge. He contributed a poem entitled *The Passionate Shepherd to his Love* to *England's Helicon*. He lived a life of debauchery, and was an atheist, but there is much tenderness and beauty in his poems. The following verses are from *The Passionate Shepherd* :

Come live with me, and be my love,  
And we will all the pleasures prove  
That valleys, groves, and hills and fields,  
Woods or steepy mountains yields.  
  
And we will sit upon the rocks,  
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,  
By shallow rivers, to whose falls  
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

*Sir Walter Raleigh* (1552-1618) is said by Izaak Walton, amongst others, to have written *The Nymph's Reply* to the



above-mentioned poem, and sent it to the same miscellany. It is quite equal in merit to the work of Marlowe. We append two verses :

If all the world and love were young,  
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,  
These pretty pleasures might me move  
To live with thee, and be thy love.

But Time drives flocks from field to fold,  
When rivers rage and flocks grow cold ;  
And Philomel becometh dumb,  
The rest complain of cares to come.

Raleigh's literary fame does not rest upon his poetical talent only. He is more justly celebrated for his *History of the World* traced down to the second Macedonian War. His fame as a courtier and soldier are too well known to need any special mention here.

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~~Thomas Lodge~~ (circa 1555-1625) was a dramatic poet. He contributed ten poems to *England's Helicon*. He has been described as 'second to Kyd in vigour and boldness of conception ; but as a drawer of character, so essential a part of dramatic poetry, he unquestionably has the advantage.' He was educated at Trinity College, Oxford, which he entered as a servitor in 1573. He was for a while an actor, but subsequently became a student of law, which he abandoned in turn for the profession of medicine. Besides two dramas, Lodge wrote pastoral tales, sonnets, and satires. His poetry is tuneful and rhythmical, but rather too ornate. Shakespeare is said to have been indebted for many of the incidents in *As You Like It* to Lodge's *Rosalynde : Euphues' Golden Legacie*, a sentimental work of very considerable power, written in prose.

*Richard Barnfield* (circa 1570-1598) was, like Lodge, a graduate of Oxford. He published a number of poems, including a collection called *Cynthia, with Certain Sonnets*, which appeared in 1595, *The Legend of Cassandra* (1595), the *Affectionate Shepherd* (1596), and *The Encomium of Lady Pecunia* (1598). Barnfield is perhaps chiefly noted for the peculiar circumstance that some of his poems were for a while, through a trick of the publisher, attributed to Shakespeare. They appeared in a volume called '*The Passionate Pilgrim*, by W. Shakespeare.' In this volume are two sonnets by Shakespeare, some verses from *Love's Labour's Lost*, and some pieces from Barnfield's *Lady Pecunia*.



One of the poems thus attributed to the Bard of Avon was reprinted in *England's Helicon* under the signature of *Ignoto* in 1600. The versification is tuneful, as will be seen from the following extract :

As it fell upon a day,  
In the merry month of May,  
Sitting in a pleasant shade,  
Which a grove of myrtles made ;  
Beasts did leap, and birds did sing ;  
Trees did grow, and plants did spring ;  
Everything did banish moan,  
Save the nightingale alone ;  
She, poor bird, as all forlorn,  
Leaned her breast up-till a thorn,  
And there sung the dolefull'st ditty,  
That to hear it was great pity.  
' Fie, fie, fie,' now she would cry ;  
' Teru, teru,' by-and-by ;  
That, to hear her so complain,  
Scarce I could from tears refrain ;  
For her griefs, so lively shown,  
Made me think upon mine own.  
Ah !—thought I—thou mourn'st in vain ;  
None takes pity on thy pain :  
Senseless trees, they cannot hear thee ;  
Ruthless bears, they will not cheer thee.  
King Pandion, he is dead ;  
All thy friends are lapped in lead ;  
All thy fellow-birds do sing,  
Careless of thy sorrowing !

*Joshua Sylvester* (1563–1618) was a merchant, and the author of a number of poetical works of considerable merit which, however, have not lived. He is best known to fame as having translated the *Divine Weeks and Works* of Du Bartas, a French poet. This work went through seven editions, and was highly spoken of by Izaak Walton and Milton, the latter of whom went so far as to copy some portions of it. This poet was known in his day as 'Silver-tongued Sylvester.'

*Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke* (1554–1628) was a poet of considerable power. He lived in the reigns of Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I. He held some high offices of state, and was raised to the peerage by King James in 1620. He was murdered by an old servant whom he had not mentioned in his will, and who had become aware of the omission. The servant, seized with remorse, then killed himself. Greville was a friend of Sir Philip Sidney, a fact which is mentioned on his tomb at Warwick. He



wrote 110 Sonnets, besides a number of other poems. His works were edited in 1871 by the Rev. A. B. Grosart.

Southey says that Dryden appears to him to have formed his tragic style more upon that of Brooke than upon any other author.

*John Heywood* was a Roman Catholic, and seems to have performed the office of a Court jester for King Henry VIII. He was a dramatist of some power, and the author of several *Interludes*, 'a class of compositions in dialogues . . . merry and farcical in subject, which were exceedingly fashionable about the time when the great controversy was raging between the (Roman) Catholic Church and the Reformed religion in England.' He was also the author of an allegorical poem entitled *The Spider and the Fly*. The Roman Church was typified by the fly, and the Reformed Church by the spider. At the death of Queen Mary in 1558, Heywood, fearing persecution, fled to Mechlin in Brabant, where he died in 1565.

*The Rev. Nicholas Udall* (1504-1556) was the author of the earliest comedy in the English language. It was entitled *Ralph Roister Doister*, and was written in 1553, before the close of the reign of Edward VI. The language is in long and irregularly-measured rhyme. He was a native of the county of Hants, head-master of Eton for some years, and subsequently of Westminster Grammar School.

*Thomas Norton* (1532-1584) is celebrated as having written, in conjunction with Lord Buckhurst, the earliest known specimen of English tragedy. The work is called *Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex*, and was performed before Queen Elizabeth at Whitehall by some barristers of the Inner Temple. According to Mr. Collier, Norton wrote the first three acts and Buckhurst the last two. The tragedy is written in blank verse, and 'observes some of the more useful rules of the classic drama of antiquity, to which it bears resemblance in the introduction of a chorus.' The following lines occur in it :

*Acastus.* Your grace should now, in these grave years of yours,  
Have found ere this the price of mortal joys ;  
How short they be, how fading here in earth ;  
How full of change, how little our estate,  
Of nothing sure, save only of the death,  
To whom both man and all the world doth owe



Their end at last : neither should nature's power  
 In other sort against your heart prevail,  
 Then as the naked hand whose stroke assays  
 The armed beast where force doth light in vain.

*Gorboduc.* Many can yield right sage and grave advice  
 Of patient sprite to others wrapped in woe,  
 And can in speech both rule and conquer kind,  
 Who, if by proof they might feel nature's force,  
 Would shew themselves men as they are indeed,  
 Which now will needs be gods.

*George Whetstone* (temp. Elizabeth) was the author of *Promos and Cassandra* (published 1578), on which Shakespeare founded his *Measure for Measure*. It was a translation of one of the *Hundred Tales* of Giraldo Cinthio, an Italian novelist. It contains a number of poetical pieces.

*George Peele* (circa 1558-1598) was educated at Christ Church, Oxford. He was 'City Poet and Conductor of Pageants for the Court.' His greatest work is entitled *The Love of King David and Fair Bathshebe*, a Scripture drama. He also wrote a drama called *Absalom*, which is described by Campbell as 'the earliest fountain of pathos and harmony that can be traced in our dramatic poetry.' Mr. Chambers says: 'It is not probable that Peele's play was written before 1590, as one passage in it seems a direct plagiarism from the *Faerie Queen* of Spenser.'

*Thomas Kyd* (temp. Elizabeth) was a dramatic poet of whose personal history very little is known. He is chiefly remarkable as being the author of a play called *Hieronimo*, or *Jeronimo*. A number of other dramatists recast it, a fact which has led to its being associated with the names of almost all the elder Elizabethan dramatists. A second part was published by Kyd in 1601, under the title of *The Spanish Tragedy, or Hieronimo is Mad Again*.

*Thomas Nash* (circa 1564-1600) was a dramatic poet, 'a lively satirist who amused the town with his attacks on Gabriel Harvey and the Puritans.' He was a man of rare gifts, though his works, which were numerous, are now but little known, except to the antiquarian. His comedy in verse, entitled *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, was performed in the presence of Queen Elizabeth in 1592. He was imprisoned on account of his satirical comedy *The Isle of Dogs*, which drew upon him the displeasure of the Court and the Government, though the play was never



printed. He was educated at the University of Cambridge, graduating at St. John's College. He was 'the Churchill of his day,' and says himself that his life was 'spent in fantastical satirism, in whose veins heretofore I misspent my spirit, and prodigally conspired against good hours.' He was born at Lowestoft.

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Robert Greene (circa 1560-1592) was born at Norwich it is thought, in the year 1560, or thereabouts. A very black account of his history is given by Gabriel Harvey, and the details of it are corroborated by Greene himself in his *Repentance of Robert Greene*, which appeared in 1592. Like Nash, he graduated at St. John's College, Cambridge, but proceeded M.A. at Clare Hall. He is chiefly remarkable for his *Groatsworth of Wit*, in which he makes the well-known punning allusion to Shakespeare which we deal with in our sketch of the great dramatist. His death resulted from a surfeit of pickled herrings and Rhenish wine. Gabriel Harvey tells us that the corpse was decked by the wife of a cordwainer with 'a garland of bays, pursuant to his last request.' The following lines from *Sephestia's Song to Her Child* are pretty :

Mother's wag, pretty boy,  
 Father's sorrow, father's joy,  
 When thy father first did see  
 Such a boy by him and me,  
 He was glad, I was woe,  
 Fortune changed, made him so ;  
 When he had left his pretty boy,  
 Last his sorrow, first his joy.  
 Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee ;  
 When thou art old, there's grief enough for thee.

Anthony Munday (1554-1633), according to the inscription on his tomb in St. Stephen's, Coleman Street, was a citizen and draper of London. Francis Meres calls him 'the best plotter among the comic poets.' The dates of his fourteen plays range from 1580 to 1621. The first of any importance was *Valentine and Orson*, which appeared in 1598. One of his dramas, entitled *Sir John Oldcastle*, was written with the assistance of Michael Drayton and others. It was published, with the name of Shakespeare on its title-page, in 1600.

Henry Chettle (died in 1603) is said to have written thirty-eight plays, either wholly or in part. Only four of these were published, and of these only three have been preserved. All



his plays were written between the years 1597 and 1603. Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.* was very probably suggested by Chettle's Cardinal Wolsey as portrayed in one of his plays. A comedy entitled *Patient Grisell* is considered the best of Chettle's works. The following lines give a good example of the poet's style :

Methinks her beauty, shining through those weeds,  
Seems like a bright star in the sullen night.  
How lovely poverty dwells on her back !  
Did but the proud world note her as I do,  
She would cast off rich robes, forswear rich statr,  
To clothe her in such poor habiliments.

*George Chapman* (1557-1634) was remarkable for ' the power with which he communicated the rich colouring of romantic poetry to the forms borrowed by his learning from Greek legend and history.' A dramatic poet of some force, he was yet more distinguished for his translation of Homer. Lamb says of him that ' he would have made a great epic poet if, indeed, he has not abundantly shown himself to be one ; for his Homer is not so properly a translation as the stories of Achilles and Ulysses rewritten.' The beauty of this author's compound Homeric epithets, as *far-shooting* Phœbus, the *silver-footed* Thetis, and the *triple-feathered* helm, have been cited by critics as evincing a chaste and luxuriant imagination.

*Thomas Middleton* (died in 1627) wrote about twenty plays, but his memory is now only kept alive by reason of ' a conjecture that an old neglected drama by him supplied the witchcraft scenery and part of the lyrical incantations of *Macbeth*.' Mr. Chambers leans rather to the idea that it was Middleton who borrowed from Shakespeare, as *Macbeth* was written in the fulness of Shakespeare's fame and genius. He may have seen the play performed, or *The Witch*, in which the resemblance to it is found, may not have been written until 1623, when the celebrated First Folio appeared. On Shrove Tuesday, 1617, some apprentices, in a town riot, destroyed the Cockpit Theatre. In describing the circumstances an old ballad says :

Books old and young on heap they flung,  
And burned them in the blazes—  
Tom Dekker, Heywood, Middleton,  
And other wandering crazys.

*Richard Edwards* (circa 1523-1566) was the best writer amongst those who contributed verse to the *Paradise of Dainty Devices*.



A poem by him, entitled *Amantium Iræ*, was accounted one of the best of the miscellaneous poems of the time in which he lived. It is said that he was not only the chief contributor, but also the framer of the *Paradise*, which was not published until ten years after his death, which occurred in 1566. This collection of miscellaneous poems was a kind of imitation of *Tottel's Miscellany*, which was a very successful venture. Sir Egerton Brydges has republished it in the *British Biographer*. 'The poems,' he says, 'do not, it must be admitted, belong to the higher classes; they are of moral and didactic kind. In their subject there is too little variety, as they deal very generally in the commonplaces of ethics, such as the ficklenesses and caprices of love, the falsehood and instability of friendship, and the vanity of all human pleasures. But many of these are often expressed with a vigour which would do credit to any era.'

*Francis Davison* (1575-1618) was the editor of the *Poetical Rhapsody*, a collection of the 'fugitive' poetry of the age, similar to *Tottel's*, and *England's Helicon*. Davison was himself a poet of no mean power, as is shown by the occasional pieces he contributed to the *Rhapsody*. He was the eldest son of the unfortunate Secretary Davison. He was the author of a poetical translation of the Psalms.

Besides the contributors to *Tottel's Miscellany* already mentioned, we may note the names of *Sir Francis Bryan*, a nephew of Lord Berners, and *George Boleyn, Viscount Rochford*, a brother of Anne Boleyn. The popular *Miscellany* was read and utilized by Shakespeare, and it is also said to have soothed the imprisonment of Mary Queen of Scots. Her Majesty is said to have written the following two lines from it with a diamond on a pane of glass in one of the windows of Fotheringay Castle :

And from the top of all my trust  
Mishap hath thrown me in the dust.

### SCOTTISH POETS

*Sir David Lyndsay* (circa 1490-1555) held the high office of Lyon King at Arms, and was a close personal friend of King James V., to whom he acted as tutor and companion. Lyndsay was born in the county of Fife, and educated at St. Andrews University. His poems are said to have helped on the Reformation in Scot-



land. His first poem, *The Dreame*, was written in the year 1528. Perhaps the most pleasing of all his works is *The Historie of Squyer Meldrum*. It deals with the adventures of the Laird of Cleish and Binns, a gentleman who served as a soldier in France during the war of 1513. It is the last poem that bears any close resemblance in manner to the old metrical romance. In his satires he attacked the three estates—Monarchs, Barons, and Clergy—with much severity. These works were full of humour and coarseness. Mr. Hallam says of him: 'In the ordinary style of his versification he seems not to rise much above the prosaic and tedious rhymes of the fifteenth century. His descriptions are as circumstantial without selection as theirs; and his language, partaking of a ruder dialect, is still more removed from our own.'

*Alexander Scott* (flourished in 1562) was the author of some satires, and a number of miscellaneous poems, 'the prevailing amatory character of which has caused him to be called *The Scottish Anacreon*, though there are many points wanting to complete his resemblance to the Teian Bard.' The following lines are from his *Rondel of Love*:

Lo, what it is to luvē,  
Learn ye that list to pruve,  
By me, I say, that no ways may  
The grund of greif remove,  
But still decay, both nicht and day;  
Lo, what it is to luvē!

*Sir Richard Maitland* (1496–1586) was the father of the Secretary Lethington of Scottish history. He lived at Lethington, in East Lothian, where he occupied his leisure in writing and collecting poems. His style is regarded as resembling that of Lyndsay. We append five lines of his *Satire on the Town Ladies*:

Some wifis of the borrowstoun  
Sae wonder vain are, and wantoun,  
In warld they wait<sup>1</sup> not what to weir:  
On clathis they ware<sup>2</sup> mony a croun;  
And all for newfangleness of geir.<sup>3</sup>

*Alexander Montgomery* (died about 1607) was the author of an allegorical poem called *The Cherry and the Slae*, which was issued in 1597. It is designed to emphasize the contrast between

<sup>1</sup> Know.

<sup>2</sup> Spend.

<sup>3</sup> Attire.



virtue and vice. It was very popular for some time, but is now almost forgotten, though Burns copied the metre in which it is written.

*Alexander Hume* (circa 1560–1609) was ‘a stern and even gloomy Puritan,’ who studied law for awhile, but eventually became a clergyman. He was Minister of Logic when he died, in 1609. He published a volume of *Hymns or Sacred Songs* in the year 1599. The best of these is entitled *The Day Estival*, which begins thus :

O perfect Light, which shed away  
The darkness from the light,  
And set a ruler o’er the day,  
Another o’er the night.

Thy glory, when the day forth flies,  
More vividly does appear,  
Nor at mid-day unto our eyes  
The shining sun is clear.

*George Buchanan* (1506–1582) wrote a Latin version of the Psalms. He was born in the county of Stirling in 1506, and was distinguished as a poet and historian. He wrote Latin poetry with the purity and grace of an ancient Roman.



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## GREATER POETS OF THE SEVEN- TEENTH CENTURY

### ENGLISH POETS

BEN JONSON

1574-1637

Here lies Jonson with the rest  
Of the poets, but the best.  
Reader, would'st thou more have known ?  
Ask his story, not the stone ;  
That will speak, what this can't tell  
Of his glory, so farewell !

*Epitaph by* ROBERT HERRICK.

'O RARE Ben Jonson !' Such are the words inscribed on the tomb of a poet who has been classed with Shakespeare in the annals of English literature. Some critics have even gone so far as to consider him the superior of the bard of Avon in solidity of genius and extent of learning, but others (and these are the most impartial) are content with assigning him the next place to that occupied by the great Dramatist.

'There are periods,' says Schlegel, the great German critic, 'when the human mind makes all at once gigantic strides in an art previously almost unknown, as if, during its long sleep, it had been collecting strength for such an effort. The age of Elizabeth was in England an epoch for dramatic poetry. This Queen, during her long reign, witnessed the first infantine attempts of the English theatre, and its most masterly productions. Shakespeare had a lively feeling of this general and rapid development of qualities not before called into exercise.' Ben Jonson was one of the few dramatic poets who attained to great



distinction in the age which also produced Shakespeare, Massinger, and Beaumont and Fletcher.

This poet was born in 1574, at Westminster. He was the posthumous son of a clergyman, who died one month before the birth of his distinguished son. His early education was received at a grammar school in the neighbourhood of his home, under Camden, who was one of the best teachers of the time. His mother married again, her second husband being a bricklayer, and Ben was taken away from school by his stepfather, who set him to the trade which he himself followed. This occupation was, it need hardly be said, extremely irksome and uncongenial to Ben, and one of his many biographers tells us that Sir Walter Raleigh, on hearing of the state of things, became interested in his welfare, and sent him to the Continent as tutor to his son. But neither did this employment suit the aspirations of the future poet. He joined the army as a volunteer, and fought against the Spaniards in Holland. It is said that he proved himself a brave soldier, killing a man on one occasion, at least, in single combat. After the campaign in question, he returned to his native land, and being entirely destitute, was forced to use his pen—that little instrument which, ‘beneath the rule of men entirely great,’ is ‘mightier than the sword.

During this period he is said to have fought a duel, killed his antagonist, and suffered a term of imprisonment in consequence. In prison he became a Roman Catholic, and for a number of years afterwards professed that religion. It has been stated by various historians that he was for awhile a student at St. John’s College, Cambridge, but, according to Mr. Shaw, at least, this statement is ‘discredited by his own silence.’

He began his theatrical career at the age of twenty, and at this early age he also married. Joining a party of strolling players, he made his first appearance at the Green Curtain, an obscure theatre near Shoreditch. He failed as an actor, and then took to writing plays. Some of these, it is said, fell into the hands of Shakespeare, who admired them, and encouraged the young author to persevere. But this is also doubted by accurate historians. Jonson imposed upon himself the task of writing a play every year. His first and most successful drama was *Every Man in His Humour*, and was composed in 1598. It was a failure at first. The fact that its action and characters



were Italian may have in a measure accounted for this. Be that as it may, it is recorded that 'Shakespeare, who was then in the full blaze of his popularity, advised the young aspirant to make some changes in the piece, and to transfer its action to England.' He took the advice, and two years afterwards the comedy, with considerable alterations, was reproduced at Shakespeare's own theatre, the Globe, this time with marked success. The part of Old Knowel, in this piece, is one of the few which Shakespeare himself is known to have acted. From that moment Jonson's star began to rise, and rose rapidly and surely. Queen Elizabeth became his patroness, and he became 'a man of mark and likelihood.'

In 1599 he produced *Every Man out of His Humour*. This is not so clever a performance as its predecessor. *Cynthia's Revels* and *The Poetaster* then appeared, and the rivalry and contention which cast a gloom over his later life began about this time. This was in a measure his own fault. He had attacked two other dramatists, Dekker and Marston, in *The Poetaster*. To this attack Dekker replied in a very spirited manner in his *Satiromastix*, with the result that Jonson produced nothing worthy of note for two years. During this period of silence he is described as 'living upon one Townsend, and scorning the world.' In 1603 he blossomed forth once more as the author of *Sejanus*, a classic drama. Soon after the accession of James I. the poet collaborated with Chapman and Marston in the composition of a comedy called *Eastward Hoe*. This work was condemned by the Court, on account of certain reflections which it cast upon the Scottish nation, and upon the King for the favour which he bestowed upon it. The delinquents were cast into prison, and threatened with facial disfigurement, some historians saying that they were condemned to have their nose slit. They were not formally tried for the offence, and when they were liberated, Jonson gave a banquet to his friends. His mother, who was present, produced a paper of poison, which she declared she had intended to administer to Ben in his liquor, taking also a dose for herself, rather than submit to the disfigurement of her son.

Between 1603 and 1619 Jonson produced some of his best works in quick succession. These comprised his three finest comedies—*Volpone*, *Epicene*, and *The Alchemist*; and *Catiline*,



his second classical tragedy. In 1619 he was made Poet Laureate, and received a pension of a hundred marks. The works of Jonson amount in all to about fifty. 'Studding his dramatic works, like gems of the purest water and finest cutting, are numerous songs, which have not been surpassed by any of our English lyrists.'<sup>1</sup>

Jonson made a tour through France in 1613, and was honoured, on his return, by the University of Oxford, which conferred on him the degree of Master of Arts. His farce, *Bartholomew's Fair*, was performed the same year at the Hope Theatre, and in 1616 he produced *The Devil is an Ass*. His health began to give way between 1625 and 1629, he became impoverished, and was helped by Charles I. with one hundred pounds. The King also raised his salary as Poet Laureate to that amount per annum, and added thereto a tierce of Spanish wine.

The character of this great poet was not without serious blemishes. He seems to have contracted a roughness of manner and habits of intemperance, which contrasted very strongly with the smoothness and beauty of his diction. Drummond, of Hawthornden, to whom Jonson paid his last visit to Scotland, kept a diary of his conversation, which was subsequently published. In it he says :

'He (Jonson) is a great lover and praiser of himself ; a contemner and scorner of others ; jealous of every word and action of those about him, especially after drink, which is one of the elements in which he liveth ; a dissembler of ill parts which reign in him ; a bragger of some good that he wanteth ; thinketh nothing well but what he himself or some of his friends or countrymen have said or done ; he is passionately kind and angry ; careless either to gain or keep ; vindictive, but, if well answered, at himself ; for any religion, as being versed in both (Protestant and Catholic) ; interpreteth best sayings and deeds often to the worst ; oppressed with fantasy, which hath ever mastered his reason, a general disease in many poets.'

Yet Jonson was popular when in his better moods. His love of conviviality, conversational powers, and literary fame, caused him to be much sought after in intellectual society. Sir Walter Raleigh founded the 'Mermaid Club,' and Jonson,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Collier's *History of English Literature*.



Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, and other poets, were members. At the Falcon Tavern in Southwark they held their revels. 'Many were the "wit combats" betwixt Shakespeare and Ben Jonson,' says Fuller, 'which two I beheld like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war : Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning, solid, but slow in his performances. Shakespeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention.'

In 1632 and 1634 Ben produced his *Magnetic Lady*, and the *Tale of a Tub*. These were the last of his dramatic writings. When he was nearing the end of his career, he commenced a musical drama of singular merit, entitled the *Sad Shepherd*, but this work he left uncompleted.

His works have been criticised by a large number of writers of established reputation. Amongst the most recent may be mentioned Leigh Hunt, Hazlitt, Gifford, and Campbell. But the best and most accurate description of his genius as a poet is that of Lord Clarendon, who says of him : ' His name can never be forgotten, having, by his very good learning, very much reformed the stage, and indeed English poetry itself. His natural advantages were, judgment to order and govern fancy, rather than excess of fancy ; his productions being slow and upon deliberation. Yet these abound with great wit and fancy, and will live accordingly ; and surely as he did exalt the English language, eloquence, propriety, and masculine expression, so he was the best judge of, and fittest to prescribe rules to, poetry and poets, of any man who had lived with or before him.'

Dryden also greatly admired the poetical genius of Jonson, and has warmly eulogized him.

Jonson died in harness. He wrote up to the last, an attack of palsy bringing his days to a close on the 16th of August, 1637, at the age of sixty-three. He lies buried under a small stone in the north-west end of Westminster Abbey, and upon the stone is the laconic inscription with which this sketch begins :

O rare Ben Jonson !



*FROM 'CYNTHIA'S REVELS'*

## SONG OF HESPERUS

Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,  
 Now the sun is laid to sleep,  
 Seated in thy silver chair,  
 State in wonted manner keep.  
 Hesperus entreats thy light,  
 Goddess excellently bright !

Earth, let not thy envious shade  
 Dare itself to interpose ;  
 Cynthia's shining orb was made  
 Heaven to clear when day did close.  
 Bless us, then, with wishèd sight,  
 Goddess excellently bright !

Lay thy bow of pearl apart,  
 And thy crystal-shining quiver :  
 Give unto the flying hart  
 Space to breathe, how short soever  
 Thou that mak'st a day of night,  
 Goddess excellently bright !

*FROM 'CATILINE'S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY'*

## ACT V., SCENE 5

\* \* \* \* \*

You might have lived in servitude or exile,  
 Or safe at Rome, depending on the great ones,  
 But that you thought these things unfit for men ;  
 And in that thought you then were valiant ;  
 For no man ever yet changed peace for war  
 But that he means to conquer. Hold that purpose.  
 There's more necessity you should be such,  
 In fighting for yourselves, than they for others.  
 He's base that trusts his feet, whose hands are arm'd.  
 Methinks I see Death and the Furies waiting  
 What we will do, and all the heaven at leisure  
 For the great spectacle. Draw then your swords ;  
 And if our destiny envy our virtue  
 The honour of the day, yet let us care  
 To sell ourselves at such a price as may  
 Undo the world to buy us, and make Fate,  
 While she tempts ours, fear her own estate.

*FROM 'THE FOREST'*

## FAREWELL TO THE WORLD

False world, good-night ! Since thou hast brought  
 That hour upon thy morn of age,  
 Henceforth I quit thee from my thought—  
 My part is ended on thy stage.

\* \* \* \* \*



I know thy forms are studied arts,  
 Thy subtle ways be narrow straits,  
 Thy courtesy but sudden starts,  
 And what thou call'st thy gifts, are baits.

I know, too, that thou strut and paint,  
 Yet thou art both shrunk up and old,  
 That only fools make thee a saint,  
 And all thy good is to be sold.

I know thou whole art but a shop  
 Of toys and trifles, traps and snares,  
 To take the weak, or make them stop :  
 Yet thou art falser than thy wares.

And, knowing this, should I yet stay,  
 Like such as blow away their lives,  
 And never will redeem a day,  
 Enamoured of their golden gyves ?

\* \* \* \* \*

Now for my peace will I go far,  
 As wanderers do, that still do roam ;  
 But make my strengths, such as they are,  
 Here in my bosom, and at home.

*FROM THE EPILOGUE TO 'EVERY MAN OUT OF HIS  
 HUMOUR'*

\* \* \* \* \*

Yet humble as the earth do I implore,  
 Oh Heaven, that she<sup>1</sup> . . .  
 . . . may suffer most late change  
 In her admired and happy government :  
 May still this Island be called Fortunate,  
 And rugged Treason tremble at the sound,  
 When Fame shall speak it with an emphasis.  
 Let foreign Polity<sup>2</sup> be dull as lead,  
 And pale invasion come with half a heart,  
 When he but looks upon her blessed soil.  
 The throat of War be stopped within her land,  
 And turtle-footed<sup>3</sup> Peace dance fairy rings  
 About her court ; where never may there come  
 Suspect<sup>4</sup> or danger, but all trust and safety.  
 Let Flattery be dumb, and Envy blind  
 In her dread presence ! Death himself admire her ;  
 And may her virtues make him to forget  
 The use of his inevitable hand !  
 Fly from her, Age ; sleep, Time, before her throne !  
 Our strongest wall falls down when she is gone.

<sup>1</sup> Queen Elizabeth.

<sup>2</sup> Intrigue.

<sup>3</sup> Compare Milton, 'Peace, with turtle-wing.'

<sup>4</sup> Suspicion.



TO CELIA<sup>1</sup>

## I

Drink to me only with thine eyes,  
 And I will pledge with mine ;  
 Or leave a kiss within the cup,  
 And I'll not look for wine.  
 The thirst, that from the soul doth rise,  
 Doth ask a drink divine :  
 But might I of Jove's nectar sup,  
 I would not change for thine.

## II

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,  
 Not so much honouring thee,  
 As giving it a hope that there  
 It could not withered be ;  
 But thou thereon didst only breathe,  
 And sent'st it back to me,  
 Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,  
 Not of itself but thee.

## EPITAPH ON THE COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE

Underneath this sable hearse  
 Lies the subject of all verse,  
 Sydney's sister, Pembroke's mother ;  
 Death, ere thou hast slain another,  
 Learned, and fair, and good as she,  
 Time shall throw a dart at thee !

## FROM 'EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR

## ADDRESS TO A RECKLESS YOUTH

*Knowell.* What would I have yonder ? I'll tell you, kinsman ;  
 Learn to be wise, and practise how to thrive,  
 That I would have you do : and not to spend  
 Your coin on every bauble that you fancy,  
 Or every foolish brain that humours you.  
 I would not have you to invade each place,  
 Nor thrust yourself on all societies,  
 Till men's affections, or your own desert,  
 Should worthily invite you to yon rank.  
 He that is so disrespectful in his courses,  
 Oft sells his reputation, as cheap market.  
 Nor would I you should melt away yourself  
 In flashing bravery, lest, while you affect  
 To make a blaze of gentry to the world,  
 A little puff of scorn extinguish it,  
 And you be left like an unsavoury snuff,  
 Whose property is only to offend.

---

<sup>1</sup> This song is a translation from a *Collection of Love Letters*, by the Greek Sophist Philostratus.



I'd ha' you sober, and contain yourself ;  
 Not that your sail be bigger than your boat ;  
 But moderate your expenses now (at first)  
 As you may keep the same proportion still.  
 Nor stand so much on your gentility,  
 Which is an airy, and mere borrow'd thing,  
 From dead men's dust, and bones ; and none of yours,  
 Except you make, or hold it.

### BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER

*Beaumont*, 1586-1616 ; *Fletcher*, 1576-1625

FRANCIS BEAUMONT was the son of Judge Beaumont, of the Court of Common Pleas. He was born at Grace-Dieu, in Leicestershire, in the year 1586. He was educated at Cambridge, and entered as a law student at the Inner Temple. He does not appear to have prospered in his legal studies. He married a lady of noble rank, and had two daughters. He died on the 6th of March, 1616, in the thirty-first year of his age. He was buried at the entrance of St. Benedict's Chapel in Westminster Abbey. There is no inscription on his tomb, but Sir John Beaumont, his elder brother, and Bishop Corbet, have written epitaphs in memory of him.

John Fletcher was the son of Richard Fletcher, Bishop of London, a prelate who did not enjoy a very enviable reputation. He, too, was educated at Cambridge, but the details of his life, beyond those directly connected with his literary work, are but scanty. He died of the plague in London in 1625, and was buried in the church of St. Mary, Southwark. No memorial was placed over his grave.

Beaumont and Fletcher were inseparable friends. Their tastes and ambitions were similar, and their dispositions generally so much in harmony that they produced between them, under their joint names, upwards of fifty tragedies, comedies, and other works. They were both scholarly and accomplished men, and the amount and literary merit of their works is nothing short of marvellous in view of the brevity of their respective lives. The excellence of these compositions has caused their authors to be compared with Ben Jonson, though the latter is distinctly their superior in point of scholarship. Their brotherly affection is said to have been utterly



devoid of any feeling of jealousy. In the words of Shakespeare :

They still have slept together,  
Rose at an instant, learn'd, play'd, eat together ;  
And whereso'er they went, like Juno's swans,  
Still they went coupled and inseparable.

The works of these two authors are said to have been more popular in their own day than were the works of Shakespeare and Jonson in theirs. In their partnership there was a notable 'division of labour.' Beaumont is supposed to have followed the bent of his peculiar genius by writing the tragedies, while Fletcher, 'a lighter and more sunny spirit, was fonder of the comic muse.' Viewed from a purely literary standpoint, their plays are witty, elegant, and vivacious, reflecting the manners and customs of that upper class of society to which the writers belonged.

Campbell, in his criticisms on the British poets, makes a learned comparison between the respective merits of these two authors. He says :

'The theatre of Beaumont and Fletcher contains all manner of good and evil. There are such extremes of grossness and magnificence in their drama, so much sweetness and beauty interspersed with views of nature either falsely romantic, or vulgar beyond reality ; there is so much to animate and amuse us, and yet so much that we would willingly overlook, that I cannot help comparing the contrasted impressions which they make, to those which we receive from visiting some great and ancient city, picturesquely but irregularly built, glittering with spires and surrounded with gardens, but exhibiting in many quarters the lanes and hovels of wretchedness. They have scenes of wealthy and high life which remind us of courts and palaces, frequented by elegant females and high-spirited gallants ; whilst their noble old martial characters, with Caractacus in the midst of them, may inspire us with the same kind of regard which we pay to the rough-hewn magnificence of an ancient fortress. Unhappily, the same simile, without being hunted down, will apply but too faithfully to the nuisances of their drama. Their language is often basely profligate. Shakespeare's and Jonson's indelicacies are but casual blots ; whilst theirs are sometimes essential colours of their painting, and extend, in one or two instances, to entire and offensive scenes.'



It would be obviously ponderous beyond excuse to give a detailed account of the fifty-two separate works of these two distinguished poets. Even Mr. Shaw shrinks from such a task, on the ground that 'a mere enumeration of the principal dramas of these animated and prolific playwrights will be found tiresome and unsatisfactory.' More or less exhaustive accounts of them may be found in Hallam's *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, and the thirty-eighth volume of the *Edinburgh Review*. The *Woman Hater*, *Philaster*, *Two Noble Kinsmen*, *King and No King*, *The Maid's Tragedy*, *The Honest Man's Fortune*, and *The Scornful Lady*, are considered to be amongst the best of their works. Perhaps the highest compliment which can be paid them is to say that in delineation of character they not uncommonly bear a resemblance to some of the works of Shakespeare.

These 'most inviolable of friends, the Orestes and Pylades of the poetical world,' are thus spoken of by Hazlitt :

'They are not safe teachers of morality; they tamper with it like an experiment *in corpore vili*. . . . The tone of Shakespeare's writings is manly and bracing; theirs is at once insipid and meretricious in the comparison. . . . The dramatic paradoxes of Beaumont and Fletcher are to all appearance tinged with an infusion of personal vanity and laxity of principle. I do not say that this was the character of the men, but it strikes me as the character of their minds. The two things are very distinct. . . . They were the first who laid the foundation of the artificial diction and tinsel pomp of the next generation of poets.' Yet he adds: 'They are lyrical and descriptive poets of the highest order; every page of their writings is a florilegium. . . . There is hardly a passion which they have not touched in their devious range, and whatever they touched, they adorned with some new grace or striking feature; they are masters of style and versification, in almost every variety of which they are capable; in comic wit and spirit they are scarcely surpassed by any writers of any age.'

Two of the plays included in the common editions of Beaumont and Fletcher are of such special merit that they are worthy of separate notice. *The Faithful Shepherdess*, which is from the unaided pen of Fletcher, is a pastoral drama of which it has been truly said that we have nothing in the language so truly pastoral



and so exquisitely poetical. The *Comus* is copied from it, and although Milton may have surpassed the original in stately and majestic poetry, it is beyond a question that Fletcher, besides the merit of priority, is more redolent of life and nature. Were it not for its indelicacy, the play would be faultless.

The *Two Noble Kinsmen* was formerly considered to be the joint production of Fletcher and Shakespeare, but the more recent idea concerning it is that Shakespeare had no connection with it. On what this belief is grounded has not yet been made quite clear. The title-page of the first edition of the play bears the names of Shakespeare and Fletcher; all the old critics speak of Shakespeare as one of its authors; the internal evidence goes a long way to support the idea; and, further, the truth of the statement was never apparently doubted until modern times, although many of Shakespeare's friends were living when the play was published. From these considerations it would seem as if the genuineness of the belief with regard to it in the first instance need not be questioned. Langbaine says decidedly that Shakespeare was one of the authors. 'None of the plays which Fletcher alone wrote are composed in the same style, or exhibit the same lofty imagination, and if there were any other dramatist, save Shakespeare, who could attain to such a height of excellence, he has certainly handed down none of his compositions to posterity.' If Shakespeare was not the one to assist in this work, then who *was* the one?

The following plays were undoubtedly the joint productions of Beaumont and Fletcher: *Philaster*, *King and No King*, *The Maid's Tragedy*, *The Scornful Lady*, *The Honest Man's Fortune*, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, *The Coxcomb*, *Cupid's Revenge*, and *The Captain*.

#### BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER

##### CONSOLATION OF EARLY DEATH

Sweet prince, the name of Death was never terrible  
To him that knew to live; nor the loud torrent  
Of all afflictions, singing as they swim,  
A gall of heart, but to a guilty conscience:  
Whilst we stand fair, though by a two-edged storm  
We find untimely falls, like early roses,  
Bent to the earth, we bear our native sweetness.  
When we are little children,  
And cry and fret for every toy comes 'cross us,



How sweetly do we show, when sleep steals on us !  
 When we grow great, but our affection greater,  
 And struggle with this stubborn twin, born with us,  
 And tug and pull, yet still we find a giant :  
 Had we not then the privilege to sleep  
 Our everlasting sleep, he would make us idiots.  
 The memory and monuments of good men  
 Are more than lives ; and though their tombs want tongues,  
 Yet have they eyes that daily sweat their losses,  
 And such a tear from stone no time can value.  
 To die both young and good are Nature's curses,  
 As the world says ; ask Truth, they are bounteous blessings,  
 For then we reach at heaven in our full virtues,  
 And fix ourselves new stars, crown'd with our goodness.

## FOLDING THE FLOCKS

Shepherds all, and maidens fair,  
 Fold your folds up ; for the air  
 'Gins to thicken, and the sun  
 Already his great course hath run.  
 See the dew-drops, how they kiss  
 Every little flower that is ;  
 Hanging on their velvet heads,  
 Like a string of crystal beads.  
 See the heavy clouds low falling,  
 And bright Hesperus down calling  
 The dead night from under ground ;  
 At whose rising, mists unsound,  
 Damps and vapours, fly apace,  
 And hover o'er the smiling face  
 Of these pastures, where they come,  
 Striking dead both bud and bloom.  
 Therefore from such danger lock  
 Every one his loved flock ;  
 And let your dogs lie loose without,  
 Lest the wolf come as a scout  
 From the mountain, and, ere day,  
 Bear a lamb or kid away ;  
 Or the crafty, thievish fox,  
 Break upon your simple flocks ;  
 To secure yourself from these  
 Be not too secure in ease ;  
 So shall you good shepherds prove,  
 And deserve your master's love.  
 Now, good-night ! may sweetest slumbers  
 And soft silence fall in numbers  
 On your eyelids : so farewell :  
 Thus I end my evening knell.

## FRANCIS BEAUMONT

## GOD'S PROVIDENCE THE HONEST MAN'S FORTUNE

O Man, thou image of thy Maker's good,  
 What can'st thou fear when breathed into thy blood  
 His Spirit is that built thee ? What dull sense  
 Makes thee suspect, in need, that Providence,



Who made the morning, and who placed the light  
 Guide to thy labours ? Who call'd up the night,  
 And bid her fall upon thee like sweet showers  
 In hollow murmurs, to lock up thy powers ?  
 Who gave thee knowledge ? Who so trusteth thee  
 To let thee grow so near Himself, the tree ?  
 Must He then be distrusted ? Shall His frame  
 Discourse with Him, why thus and thus I am ?  
 He made the angels thine, thy fellows all :  
 Nay, even thy servants when devotions call :  
 O canst thou be so stupid, then, so dim,  
 To seek a saving influence, and lose Him ?  
 Can stars protect thee ? or can poverty,  
 Which is the light to heaven, put out His eye ?  
 He is my star, in Him all truth I find,  
 All influence, all fate ; and when my mind  
 Is furnish'd with His fulness, my poor story  
 Should outlive all their age and all their glory.

PARAPHRASE OF LINES ON THE TOMBS IN  
 WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Mortality, behold and fear  
 What a change of flesh is here !  
 Think how many royal bones  
 Sleep within these heaps of stones ;  
 Here they lie, had realms and lands,  
 Who now want strength to stir their hands,  
 Where from their pulpits seal'd with dust  
 They preach, ' In greatness is no trust.'  
 Here's an acre sown indeed  
 With the richest royallest seed  
 That the earth did e'er suck in  
 Since the first man died for sin :  
 Here the bones of birth have cried  
 ' Though gods they were, as men they died !'  
 Here are sands, ignoble things,  
 Dropt from the ruin'd sides of kings :  
 Here's a world of pomp and state  
 Buried in dust, once dead by fate.

JOHN FLETCHER

MELANCHOLY

Hence, all you vain delights,  
 As short as are the nights  
 Wherein you spend your folly :  
 There's nought in this life sweet,  
 If man were wise to see 't,  
 But only melancholy,  
 O sweetest melancholy !  
 Welcome, folded arms, and fix'd eyes,  
 A sigh that piercing mortifies,



A look that's fasten'd to the ground,  
 A tongue chain'd up without a sound !  
 Fountain heads and pathless groves,  
 Places which pale passion loves !  
 Moonlight walks, when all the fowls  
 Are warmly housed, save bats and owls !  
 A midnight bell, a parting groan !  
 These are the sounds we feed upon :  
 Then stretch our bones in a still gloomy valley ;  
 Nothing's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy.

## REV. GEORGE HERBERT

1593-1633

THE claim of George Herbert to be called a ' Poet of the English Church ' will be universally admitted. All that lives, and will live, of his poetical works has a direct bearing upon ecclesiastical matters.

He was born in the Castle of Montgomery on the 3rd of April, 1593. His father, Richard Herbert, was descended from an ancient and distinguished line of ancestors. He had seven sons, of whom the subject of this memoir was the fourth. His mother was a member of the Newport family, and the eldest son became Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and celebrated as a Deist. Lord Herbert says of his brother George that ' his life was most holy and exemplary, insomuch that about Salisbury, where he lived beneficed for many years, he was little less than sainted. He was not exempt from passion and choler, being infirmities to which all our race is subject, but that excepted, without reproach in his actions.' The poet had also three sisters, and of her ten children the mother would often say that they were Job's number and Job's distribution, and as often bless God that they were neither defective in their shapes nor in their reason. His father died in 1597.

The future poet spent a happy and contented childhood, under the care of his mother and a clerical tutor, until he was twelve years old, when he was sent to Westminster School, and placed under the care of Dr. Neale, Dean of Westminster, and of Mr. Ireland, the Headmaster. Izaak Walton says :

' The beauties of his pretty behaviour and wit showed, and became so eminent and lovely in this, his innocent age, that



he seemed to be marked out for piety, and to become the care of Heaven, and of a particular good angel to guide and guard him. And thus he continued in that school, till he came to be perfect in the learned languages, and especially in the Greek tongue, in which he afterwards proved an excellent critic.'

A King's scholarship enabled him to leave school at the age of fifteen, and proceed to Trinity College, Cambridge. There he devoted all his best energies to the acquisition of knowledge, and informed his mother that he had made up his mind to consecrate to God his 'poor abilities in poetry.' He graduated B.A. in 1611, and in 1615, at the age of twenty-two, proceeded M.A., and was elected Major Fellow of his college. In 1619 he was chosen as Public Orator of the University, at a salary of £30 a year. The discharge of the duties of this office brought him into connection with the Court of King James I. That monarch presented the University of Cambridge with his book *Basilikon Doron*, which was the occasion of Herbert's first notable exercise of his privilege as Orator. He sent a letter to King James, at the close of which he wrote :

Quid Vaticanam Bodleianamque objicis hospes !  
Unicus est nobis Bibliotheca Liber.

So excellent was the Latin in which this letter was couched that the King asked his kinsman, the Earl of Pembroke, if he knew the writer. The answer was that 'he knew him very well, and that he was his kinsman ; but he loved him more for his learning and virtue than for that he was of his name and family.' The King smiled and asked the Earl's leave 'that he might love him too, for he took him to be the jewel of that University.' He was by this time in the habit of writing courtly poems. The King continued to notice him, and after awhile gave him a sinecure office at Court which brought him £120 a year. At this time the great ambition of Herbert was to be made a Secretary of State, and he applied himself with great diligence to the study of the French, Italian, and Spanish languages. But the deaths of the Duke of Richmond and Marquis of Hamilton, in 1625, followed by that of the King himself, put an end to the poet's aspirations in this direction. Under the altered circumstances he was not slow or loth to abandon 'the painted pleasure of Court life for the study of Divinity.' He went into Kent, and studied so hard



that he seriously impaired his health, his object being to take Holy Orders. This accomplished, he was presented by the Bishop of Lincoln in 1626 to the Prebend of Layton Ecclesia. In this position he restored his church with the assistance of many friends.

An attack of ague caused him to retire for awhile to Woodford, in Essex, and afterwards to Dauntsey, in Wiltshire, where he met a lady whom he married after three or four days' acquaintance. She was the fourth of Mr. Danvers' nine daughters. Three months afterwards he was presented to the Rectory of Bemerton by Charles I. Influenced by the advice of Archbishop Laud, he accepted the benefice and spent the remainder of his life in the discharge of its duties. A touching story is told of his induction. According to custom, he was locked in the church by himself, that he might ring the bell before reopening it to his parishioners. The people who were waiting outside became impatient at his long delay, and, looking in through the window, saw him prostrate in prayer before the altar, where he was making a vow to set a good example to other clergymen. So exemplary was his life afterwards that his friend, Nicholas Ferrar, has described him as 'a peer to primitive saints, and more than a pattern to his own age.' He died on the 3rd of March, 1632. On the Sunday before his death he suddenly rose from his couch, called for one of his instruments, and said :

My God, my God,  
My music shall find Thee,  
And every string  
Shall have his attribute to sing.

And having tuned it, he played and sang :

The Sundays of man's life,  
Threaded together on Time's string,  
Make bracelets to adorn the wife  
Of the Eternal Glorious King.  
On Sunday Heaven's door stands ope ;  
Blessings are plentiful and rife,  
More plentiful than hope.

It was thus that the soul of ' Holy George Herbert ' passed away.

It is a well-known fact that Herbert used to walk twice a week to Salisbury Cathedral and back. Walton relates an anecdote of one of these expeditions. When Herbert was some way on his journey he overtook a poor man, standing by a poorer horse that had fallen down beneath too heavy a burden ; and seeing



the distress of the one and the suffering of the other, he put off his canonical dress and helped the man to unload, and afterwards to reload the horse. He then gave the man money to refresh himself and the animal, and departed, telling the man before he went that if he loved himself he should be merciful to his beast. This incident was utilized by Cooper, the Royal Academician, as a subject for an interesting design.

Herbert's poems were published collectively in a volume which he called *The Temple, Sacred Poems, and Private Ejaculations*. It appeared in 1633. The first poem is called *The Church Porch*. It is full of morality, piety, and beauty. Almost as well known as Denham's isolated lines to the Thames are these :

When once thy foot enters the church, be bare.  
 God is more there than thou ; for thou art there  
 Only by His permission. Then beware ;  
 And make thyself all reverence and fear.  
     Kneeling ne'er spoil'd silk stocking. Quit thy state :  
     All equal are within the church's gate.

The poem is thickly studded with gems of pious admonition, a few of which are contained in the following typical verses :

Resort to sermons, but to prayers most :  
     Praying's the end of preaching. O be drest !  
 Stay not for th' other pin ; why thou hast lost  
     A joy for it worth worlds. Thus hell doth jest  
     Away thy blessings, and extremely flout thee,  
     Thy clothes being fast, but thy soul loose about thee.

In time of service seal up both thine eyes,  
 And send them to thine heart, that, spying sin,  
 They may weep out the stains by them did rise ;  
     Those whose door being shut, all by the ear comes in.  
     Who marks in church-time other's symmetry,  
     Makes all their beauty his deformity.

Judge not the preacher ; for he is thy Judge.  
     If thou mislike him, thou conceiv'st him not.  
 God calleth preaching folly : Do not grudge  
     To pick out treasures from an earthen pot.  
     The worst speak something good ; if all want sense,  
     God takes a text, and preacheth patience.

Some of these poems are artificially fanciful, in accordance with the taste of that day. *The Altar* is a poem in the shape of an altar ; *Eagles' Wings* are two poems in the shape of wings. Among the most beautiful of the poems are *The Sacrifice*, *Affliction*, *Conduct*, and *Sunday*. I will quote one or two exquisite specimens. Here is one on *The Holy Scriptures* :



Oh that I knew how all thy lights combine,  
 And the configurations of their glorie,  
 Seeing not only how each verse doth shine,  
 But all the constellations of the storie.  
 Stars are poor books, and oftentimes do miss :  
 This book of stars lights to eternal bliss.

Dean Farrar, in an interesting article contributed to *Great Thoughts*, gives the following useful collection of criticisms on the poetry of Herbert. He tells that Headley, in his *Ancient English Poetry*, ventured to say, 'His poetry is a compound of enthusiasm without sublimity, and conceit without either ingenuity or imagination.' So frivolous a criticism rises from lack of all catholicity of taste, and does not distinguish the *vitia hominis* from the *vitia temporis*. Herbert met the taste of his own day, and was deeply influenced by his friend Dr. Donne. But had he been so devoid of poetic merit, as Headley, with his eighteenth-century standard, says, he could never have won such testimonies as he did win from men of the highest genius and supreme excellence. Archbishop Leighton loved his verse. Charles I., in his prison at Carisbrook Castle, solaced his lonely misery by reading him. Richard Crawshaw felt for him a genuine admiration. Henry Vaughan, in the preface to *Silex Scintillans*, rightly calls attention to the fact that Herbert's 'holy life and verse' was the first decided check to the foul and overflowing stream of the monstrous wit of his times. Richard Baxter, while he placed him, as a poet, far below Cowley, yet says, 'Heart-work and Heaven-work made up his books.' In his own day, Lord Bacon and Donne estimate his genius most highly. If Addison criticises his 'false wit,' Cowper, in his depression, 'found delight in reading him all day long.' Lastly, no less a literary authority than the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge not only spoke of him as 'that model of a man, a gentleman, and a clergyman,' but says that 'the quaintness of some of his thoughts—not of his diction, than which nothing can be more pure, manly, and unaffected—has blinded modern readers to the great general merits of his poems, which are for the most part exquisite in their kind.'

Perhaps the loveliest poem in the book is that on *Virtue* :

Sweet day ! so cool, so calm, so bright,  
 The bridal of the earth and sky ;  
 The dewes shall weep thy fall to-night,  
 For thou must die.



Sweet rose ! whose hue, angry and brave,  
 Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye ;  
 Thy root is ever in his grave,  
 And thou must die.

Sweet spring ! full of sweet days and roses,  
 A box where sweets compacted lie ;  
 Thy music shows ye have your closes  
 And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,  
 Like season'd timber, never gives ;  
 But though the whole world turn to coal,  
 Then chiefly lives.

One more quotation, but that a very memorable one, must suffice to show how much gold may be digged out of this treasure-house. It is a sonnet called *Sin* :

Lord, with what care hast Thou begirt us round !  
 Parents first season us, then schoolmasters  
 Deliver us in laws ; they send us bound  
 To rules of reason ; holy messengers,  
 Pulpits and Sundays, sorrow dogging sin,  
 Afflictions sorted, anguish of all sizes,  
 Fine nets and stratagems to catch us in,  
 Bibles laid open, millions of surprises,  
 Blessings beforehand, ties of gratefulness,  
 The sound of glory ringing in our ears ;  
 Without, our shame ; within, our consciences ;  
 Angels and grace, eternal hopes and fears :—  
 Yet all these fences, and their whole array,  
 One cunning bosom-sin blows quite away.

### FRANCIS QUARLES

1592-1644

THIS poet was born near Romford, in Essex, in the year 1592. His father was Clerk of the Green Cloth, and Purveyor of the Navy, under the Governments of Queen Elizabeth. He was educated at Cambridge University, and studied law at Lincoln's Inn. The Queen of Bohemia, daughter of James I., conferred on him the office of Cup-bearer. Subsequently he was appointed private secretary to Archbishop Ussher. He wrote a book called *The Loyal Convert*, which was condemned by Parliament as of a dangerous and seditious tendency, and, as a punishment, his books were burnt and his property sequestrated. It is thought that the severity of this penalty hastened his death, which occurred in 1644.



His most celebrated work is entitled *Divine Emblems*, which are a number of poems illustrated by means of engravings 'filled with what may be called allegory run mad.' The most that can be said of them is that they are quaint and curious, the poems possessing much cleverness and vigour of style, though without great pretensions to polish or elegance. Other poems of this author are *Sion's Elegies*, *The School of the Heart*, *Hieroglyphics of the Life of Man*, and *Histories of Samson, Job, Esther, and Jonah*. The writings of Quarles have in them much that is beyond mere quaintness. Dignity, clearness of vision, simplicity of style, and depth of feeling—all these qualities are to be found in them. It has been truly said of him that no man had a correcter notion of the beauty of style. He may fairly be looked upon as having put into practice his own precept—'Clothe not thy language either with obscurity or affectation; in the one thou discoverest too much darkness, in the other too much lightness. He that speaks from the understanding to the understanding is the best interpreter.' Though a keen Royalist, his works are not without a Puritan tone, and his poetry is further to be accounted an 'extravagant specimen of the Metaphysical School.'

## MAN

Can he be fair, that withers at a blast ?  
 Or he be strong, that airy breath can cast ?  
 Can he be wise, that knows not how to live ?  
 Or he be rich, that nothing hath to give ?  
 Can he be young, that's feeble, weak, and wan ?  
 So fair, strong, wise, so rich, so young is man.  
 So fair is man, that death (a parting blast)  
 Blasts his fair flower, and makes him earth at last ;  
 So strong is man, that with a gasping breath  
 He totters, and bequeaths his strength to death ;  
 So wise is man, that if with death he strive,  
 His wisdom cannot teach him how to live ;  
 So rich is man, that (all his debts being paid)  
 His wealth's the winding sheet wherein he's laid ;  
 So young is man, that, broke with care and sorrow,  
 He's old enough to-day to die to-morrow.  
 Why bragg'st thou then, thou worm of five feet long ?  
 Thou'rt neither fair, nor strong, nor wise, nor rich, nor young.

## THE SHORTNESS OF LIFE

And what's a life ? A weary pilgrimage,  
 Whose glory in one day doth fill the stage  
 With childhood, manhood, and decrepit age.



And what's a life ? The flourishing array  
Of the proud summer-meadow, which to-day  
Wears her green plush, and is to-morrow hay.

Read on this dial, how the shades devour  
My short-lived winter's day ! hour eats up hour ;  
Alas ! the total's but from eight to four.

Behold these lilies, which thy hands have made  
Fair copies of my life, and open laid  
To view, how soon they droop, how soon they fade !

Shade not that dial, night will blind too soon ;  
My nonaged day already points to noon ;  
How simple is my suit ! how small my boon !

Nor do I beg this slender inch to wile  
The time away, or falsely to beguile  
My thoughts with joy : here's nothing worth a smile.

#### THE VANITY OF THE WORLD

False world, thou ly'st ; thou canst not lend  
The least delight ;  
Thy favours cannot gain a friend,  
They are so slight ;  
Thy morning pleasures make an end  
To please at night :  
Poor are the wants that thou supply'st,  
And yet thou vaunt'st, and yet thou vy'st  
With heaven ; fond earth, thou boasts ; false world, thou ly'st.

Thy babbling tongue tells golden tales  
Of endless treasure ;  
Thy bounty offers easy sales  
Of lasting pleasure ;  
Thou ask'st the conscience what she ails,  
And swear'st to ease her ;  
There's none can want where thou supply'st ;  
There's none can give where thou deny'st.  
Alas ! fond world, thou boasts ; false world, thou ly'st.

What well-advised ear regards  
What earth can say ?  
Thy words are gold, but thy rewards  
Are painted clay :  
Thy cunning can but pack the cards,  
Thou canst not play :  
Thy game at weakest, still thou vy'st ;  
If seen, and then revyv'd, deny'st :  
Thou art not what thou seem'st ; false world, thou ly'st.

Thy tinsel bosom seems a mint  
Of new-coined treasure ;  
A paradise, that has no stint,  
No change, no measure ;  
A painted cask, but nothing in't,  
Nor wealth, nor pleasure :  
Vain earth ! that falsely thus comply'st  
With man ; vain man ! that thou rely'st  
On earth ; vain man, thou dot'st ; vain earth, thou ly'st.



What mean dull souls, in this high measure,  
     To haberdash  
 In earth's base wares, whose greatest treasure  
     Is dross and trash ?  
 The height of whose enchanting pleasure  
     Is but a flash ?  
 Are these the goods that thou supply'st  
 Us mortals with ? Are these the high'st ?  
 Can these bring cordial peace ? false world, thou ly'st.

## JAMES SHIRLEY

*Circa 1594-1666*

THE great line of distinguished dramatists of the Elizabethan era, which began with Christopher Marlowe, came to an end with James Shirley. He is supposed to have been born in London about the year 1594. He was educated at Merchant Taylors' School and at St. John's College, Oxford, where he attracted the attention of Laud, who was at that time Master. The Master treated Shirley with much kindness, but dissuaded him from taking Holy Orders on account of a conspicuous mole on his left cheek. This disfigurement can be seen in the portrait of the dramatist which hangs in the Bodleian Library. He left Oxford without taking a degree, but went to Catherine Hall, Cambridge, when he graduated in due course. In 1623 he was appointed a master in St. Albans Grammar School. He had previously taken Holy Orders, and was presented to a living, which he very soon resigned, on becoming a convert to the Roman Catholic faith. In his twenty-ninth year he gave up teaching and went on the stage.

Shirley's literary career began in 1618, when he published a poem entitled *Echo, or the Unfortunate Lovers*. No copy of this poem can now be traced. His first play, entitled *Love Tricks*, was licensed in 1623, but was not published until 1631, when its title was altered to *The School of Compliment*. *The Wedding*, a comedy, was published in 1629, and *The Grateful Servant* in 1630. These last 'placed the poet high among the dwindling band of dramatists who still kept up something of the great Elizabethan tradition.'

In 1631 Shirley made his first appearance as a writer of tragedies. His first essay in that direction was *The Traitor*.



Some others followed, but he wisely came to the conclusion that comedy was more in his line, and accordingly he reverted to that class of writing. Twelve comedies were issued in close succession between the years 1631 and 1635. Of these the last—*The Lady of Pleasure*—was the best. Charles I. said that *The Gamester* was the best play he had seen for seven years. It was acted in 1633.

Shirley paid a visit to Dublin, which was marked by the issue of several plays, amongst which were *St. Patrick for Ireland*, *The Royal Master*, and *The Humorous Courtier*. He returned to England in 1640, and between that time and the date of the closing of the theatres he wrote at least ten plays, of which the best was entitled *The Cardinal*. In 1646 he issued a volume containing his collected poems.

Shirley's manner is uniformly good. His strongest point is the delineation of the doings of fashionable society. Only a portion of his many plays, but that a large portion, has been preserved.

On September 2, 1642, the performance, or even the witnessing, of theatrical performances, was declared to be a penal offence. Fourteen years afterwards the drama was revived, but under entirely new conditions. In the year of revival Shirley died, having made his mark as one of the greatest of the brilliant group of dramatists which saw the decline and fall of their art.

#### SONG FROM 'THE IMPOSTURE'

You virgins, that did late despair  
To keep your wealth from cruel man,  
Tie up in silk your careless hair—  
Soft peace is come again.

Now lovers' eyes may gently shoot  
A flame that will not kill;  
The drum was angry, but the lute  
Shall whisper what you will.

Sing Io, Io! for his sake,  
Who hath restored your drooping heads;  
With choice of sweetest flowers, make  
A garden where he treads.

Whilst we whole groves of laurel bring,  
A pretty triumph to his brow,  
Who is the master of our spring  
And all the bloom we owe.



DEATH'S FINAL CONQUEST<sup>1</sup>

The glories of our blood and state  
 Are shadows, not substantial things ;  
 There is no armour against fate ;  
 Death lays his icy hand on kings :  
     Sceptre and crown  
     Must tumble down,  
 And in the dust be equal made  
 With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,  
 And plant fresh laurels where they kill ;  
 But their strong nerves at last must yield ;  
 They tame but one another still :  
     Early or late,  
     They stoop to fate,  
 And must give up their murmuring breath,  
 When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow,  
 Then boast no more your mighty deeds ;  
 Upon Death's purple altar now,  
 See where the victor-victim bleeds :  
     All heads must come  
     To the cold tomb,  
 Only the actions of the just  
 Smell sweet, and blossom in their dust.

## REV. ROBERT HERRICK

1591-1674

THOUGH now accounted one of the sweetest lyrical poets of the age in which he lived, the name of Robert Herrick was hardly known until many years after his death. Dr. Drake, in his *Literary Hours*, helped to save a number of his most pleasing poems from unmerited oblivion. Ellis, in his *Specimens*, rendered a like service, and other writers from time to time have done him tardy justice. In his life there is nothing sufficiently remarkable to demand a lengthy notice.

He was born in London in the year 1591, the son of a goldsmith in Cheapside. He was educated at Cambridge, and took Holy Orders. In 1629 he was presented by Charles I. to the living of Dean Prior, in Devonshire. Here he spent nineteen years of quiet and uninterrupted attention to his clerical duties, spending much of his leisure in the composition of poetry. In his earlier years he had made the friendship of some of the most notable

<sup>1</sup> A lyric found in Shirley's masque, *The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses*. It is said to have been much admired by Charles II., a fact at which no critic will wonder.



writers of the day, including Ben Jonson and Selden. When Cromwell came into power he was ejected, in 1647, as a Royalist, and went to London. Here he continued to write, with the result that he published his *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* in 1648. On the restoration of the monarchy being accomplished, he was readmitted to his benefice, in 1662, and again lived in literary ease until his death, which took place in 1674.

Many of the lyrics of this poet are unsurpassed. '*To Blossoms, To Daffodils, Gather the Rosebuds while ye may*—names like these suggest the sources whence his verses draw their many-coloured beauty. Flowers, birds, fruit, gems, pretty women, and little children are his favourite themes.' And yet the praise of his works is not untinged with blame. While Dr. Collier lets him pass with the words just quoted, Mr. Shaw finds in him 'the most unaccountable mixture of sensual coarseness with exquisite refinement. Like the Faun of the ancient sculpture, his Muse unites the bestial and the Divine.' Yet sweet and untainted are lines like these :

#### TO DAFFODILS

Fair daffodils, we weep to see  
 You haste away so soon ;  
 As yet the early rising sun  
 Has not attained his noon.  
     Stay, stay,  
 Until the hasting day  
     Has run  
 But to the even-song !  
 And, having prayed together, we  
 Will go with you along.  
 We have short time to stay as you  
 We have as short a spring,  
 As quick a growth to meet decay,  
 As you, or anything.  
     We die,  
 As your hours do, and dry  
     Away,  
 Like to the summer's rain,  
 Or as the pearls of morning dew,  
 Ne'er to be found again.

and these :

#### ADDRESS TO THE MEADOWS IN WINTER

Ye have been fresh and green.  
 Ye have been fill'd with flowers :  
 And ye the walks have been  
 Where maids have spent their hours.  
 Ye have beheld where they  
 With wicker arks did come  
 To kiss and bear away  
 The richer cowslips home.



## TO BLOSSOMS

Fair pledges of a fruitful tree,  
 Why do ye fall so fast ?  
 Your date is not so past,  
 But you may stay yet here awhile,  
 To blush and gently smile,  
 And go at last.

What ! were ye born to be  
 An hour or half's delight,  
 And so to bid good-night ?  
 'Twas pity Nature brought you forth  
 Merely to show your worth,  
 And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we  
 May read how soon things have  
 Their end, though ne'er so brave ;  
 And after they have shown their pride,  
 Like you, awhile, they glide  
 Into the grave.

## UPON A CHILD THAT DIED

Here she lies, a pretty bud,  
 Lately made of flesh and blood,  
 Who as soon fell fast asleep  
 As her little eyes did peep.  
 Give her strewings, but not stir  
 The earth that lightly covers her !

## TO DIANEME

Sweet, be not proud of those two eyes  
 Which starlike sparkle in their skies ;  
 Nor be you proud, that you can see  
 All hearts your captives ; yours yet free :  
 Be you not proud of that rich hair  
 Which wantons with the love-sick air ;  
 When as that ruby which you wear,  
 Sunk from the tip of your soft ear,  
 Will last to be a precious stone  
 When all your world of beauty's gone.

## ABRAHAM COWLEY

1618-1667

To him no author was unknown,  
 Yet what he wrote was all his own ;  
 Horace's wit, and Virgil's state,  
 He did not steal, but emulate !  
 And when he would like them appear,  
 Their garb, but not their clothes, did wear.

SIR JOHN DENHAM.

' I BELIEVE I can tell the particular little chance that filled my head with such chimes of verses, as have never left ringing there. I remember when I began to read, and to take pleasure in it,



there was wont to lie in my mother's parlour, I know not by what accident, for she herself never in her life read any book but of devotion—but there was wont to lie Spenser's works. This I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the stories of the knights, and giants, and monsters, and brave houses which I found everywhere (though my understanding had little to do with all this), and, by degrees, with the tinkling of the rhyme and dance of the numbers, so that I think I had read him all over before I was twelve years old.'

Such is the account which Abraham Cowley gives us of the circumstances which first led him to delight in poetry.

This poet was born in Fleet Street, London, in the year 1618. He was the posthumous son of a stationer. His widowed mother found it difficult to afford her son a liberal education, but was successful in procuring him an entry into Westminster School as a King's scholar, from whence he proceeded in due course to Trinity College, Cambridge, of which he was elected a scholar in 1636. Having obtained the degree of M.A., he was expelled from the University for his sympathy with the Royalist party, but solaced himself by entering St. John's College, Oxford.

The poetical genius of Cowley began to show itself very early in his career. At the age of fifteen he published a volume of verse, entitled *Poetical Blossoms*, which attracted some attention, as being far above the average of youthful productions. In his college days he wrote a pastoral comedy, which was acted before the University of Cambridge by members of Trinity College. He is by all historians accounted one of the most accomplished and learned writers of his time, and, though in course of time his reputation as a poet has somewhat diminished, the loss of fame has been attributed 'to that abuse of intellectual ingenuity, that passion for learned, far-fetched, and recondite illustrations which was to a certain extent the vice of his age.'

King Charles II., who had basely deserted him, declared after his death that 'Mr. Cowley had not left a better man behind him in England.' Dr. Aikin tells us that 'at the time of his death Cowley certainly ranked as the first poet in England; for Milton lay under a cloud, nor was the age qualified to appreciate him.' Cowley was well acquainted with Greek and Latin literature, and paraphrased the *Odes of Anacreon*, besides publishing *Pindaric Odes*. 'It may be affirmed,' says Dr. Johnson, 'without



any encomiastic fervour, that he brought to his poetic labours a mind replete with learning, and that his pages are embellished with all the ornaments which books can supply ; that he was the first who imparted to English numbers the enthusiasm of the greater ode, and the gaiety of the less ; that he was equally qualified for sprightly sallies, and for lofty flights ; that he was among those who freed translation from servility, and instead of following his author at a distance, walked by his side.'

*Miscellanies ; Elegies ; The Mistress*, a collection of cold, metaphysical love poems ; a Latin work on *Plants*, in six books, partly in elegiac, partly in heroic verse ; and the  *Davideis*, a heroic poem originally intended to be in twelve books, but only four of which are written, complete the list of Cowley's poetical works.

Mr. Chambers tells us that Cowley was the most popular poet of his time, but his fame rapidly decayed after his death. Dryden said of him : ' Though he must always be thought a great poet, he is no longer esteemed a good writer.' Alexander Pope asked :

Who now reads Cowley ? If he pleases yet,  
His moral pleases, not his pointed wit :  
Forget his epic, nay, Pindaric art,  
But still I love the language of his heart.

Cowley died in 1667, and was interred in Westminster Abbey.

#### FROM THE ELEGY 'ON THE DEATH OF MR. WILLIAM HERVEY'

It was a dismal and a fearful night,  
Scarce could the morn drive on th' unwilling light,  
When sleep, death's image, left my troubled breast,  
By something liker death possessed.  
My eyes with tears did uncommanded flow,  
And on my soul hung the dull weight  
Of some intolerable fate.  
What bell was that ? Ah me ! too much I know.

My sweet companion, and my gentle peer,  
Why hast thou left me thus unkindly here,  
Thy end for ever, and my life to moan ?  
O thou hast left me all alone !  
Thy soul and body, when death's agony  
Besieged around thy noble heart,  
Did not with more reluctance part  
Than I, my dearest friend, do part from thee.



My dearest friend, would I had died for thee !  
 Life and this world henceforth will tedious be.  
 Nor shall I know hereafter what to do,

    If once my grief prove tedious too.  
 Silent and sad I walk about all day,  
 As sullen ghosts stalk speechless by  
 Where their hid treasures lie ;  
 Alas, my treasure's gone ! why do I stay ?

He was my friend, the truest friend on earth ;  
 A strong and mighty influence joined our birth.  
 Nor did we envy the most sounding name  
 By friendship given of old to fame.  
 None but his brethren he, and sisters, knew  
 Whom the kind youth preferred to me ;  
 And even in that we did agree,  
 For much above myself I loved them too.

Say, for you saw us, ye immortal lights,  
 How oft unwearied have we spent the nights ?  
 Till the Ledaean stars, so famed for love,  
 Wondered at us from above.  
 We spent them not in toys, in lusts, or wine,  
 But search of deep philosophy,  
 Wit, eloquence, and poetry ;  
 Arts which I loved, for they, my friend, were thine.

Ye fields of Cambridge—our dear Cambridge !—say,  
 Have ye not seen us walking every day ?  
 Was there a tree about which did not know  
 The love betwixt us two ?  
 Henceforth, ye gentle trees, for ever fade ;  
 Or your sad branches thicker join,  
 And into darksome shades combine,  
 Dark as the grave wherein my friend is laid !

#### A SUPPLICATION

Awake, awake, my Lyre !  
 And tell thy silent master's humble tale  
 In sounds that may prevail ;  
 Sounds that gentle thoughts inspire :  
 Though so exalted she  
 And I so lowly be,  
 Tell her, such different notes make all thy harmony.

Hark ! how the strings awake :  
 And, though the moving hand approach not near,  
 Themselves with awful fear  
 A kind of numerous trembling make.  
 Now all thy forces try ;  
 Now all thy charms apply ;  
 Revenge upon her ear the conquests of her eye.

Weak Lyre ! thy virtue sure  
 Is useless here, since thou art only found  
 To cure, but not to wound,  
 And she to wound, but not to cure.  
 Too weak too wilt thou prove  
 My passion to remove ;  
 Physic to other ills, thou'rt nourishment to love.



Sleep, sleep again, my Lyre !  
 For thou canst never tell my humble tale  
 In sounds that will prevail,  
 Nor gentle thoughts in her inspire ;  
 All thy vain mirth lay by,  
 Bid thy strings silent lie,  
 Sleep, sleep again, my Lyre, and let thy master die.

## EPITAPH OF THE LIVING AUTHOR

Here, stranger, in this humble nest,  
 Here Cowley sleeps ; here lies,  
 'Scaped all the toils that life molest,  
 And its superfluous joys.

Here, in no sordid poverty,  
 And no inglorious ease,  
 He braves the world, and can defy  
 Its frowns and flatteries.

The little earth he asks, survey :  
 Is he not dead, indeed ?  
 ' Light lie that earth,' good stranger, pray,  
 ' Nor thorn upon it breed !'

With flowers, fit emblem of his fame,  
 Compass your poet round ;  
 With flowers of every fragrant name,  
 Be his warm ashes crowned !

## JOHN MILTON

1608-1674

JOHN MILTON was born in Bread Street, London, between six and seven o'clock in the morning of the 9th of December, A.D. 1608. He was the elder son of John Milton, a scrivener. The poet's grandfather, also named John, was an under-ranger or keeper of the forest of Shotover, near Halton, in Oxfordshire. According to Mr. Wood, an authority who is also quoted by Dr. Newton, the family came from Milton, a place near Halton and Thame, where it flourished for several years, till the estate was sequestered, one of the family having taken the unfortunate side in the civil wars between the Houses of York and Lancaster. The poet's father had 'a taste for the politer arts,' and was especially skilled in music, in which he was not only a fine performer, but is also celebrated for several pieces of his composition. He was by all accounts a very worthy man, and his wife, Sarah Caston, a Welsh lady, the poet's mother, was a woman of incomparable virtue and goodness.



From an early age their son John showed unmistakable signs of very exceptional genius. In consequence of this, his parents spared neither pains nor money in the matter of providing him with the best possible education, which was afforded partly by private tutors, and eventually at a public school—St. Paul's. It appears from the fourth of his Latin elegies, and from the first and fourth of his epistles, that Mr. Thomas Young, who was afterwards pastor of the company of English merchants residing at Hamburg, was one of his private tutors. The Master of St. Paul's School during Milton's time there was Mr. Gill, to whose son the poet seems to have been greatly attached, as is evidenced by the fact that to him some of the aforementioned epistles are addressed. So great was the boy's love of learning, and so strong his ambition, that from the age of twelve he was accustomed to pursue his studies until midnight. To this he himself attributes the first weakening of his eyesight, which eventually culminated in total blindness.

In the seventeenth year of his age he was sent to Christ's College, Cambridge, being already a very good classical scholar, and master of several languages. His tutor was Mr. William Chappel, afterwards Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, and Bishop of Cork and Ross. He was more than seven years at the University, graduating B.A. in 1629, and M.A. in 1632. Dr. Newton dwells upon the fact that, 'though the merits of both our Universities are perhaps equally great, and though poetical exercises are rather more encouraged at Oxford, yet most of our greatest poets have been bred at Cambridge, as Spenser, Cowley, Waller, Dryden, Prior, not to mention any of the lesser ones, when there is a greater than all, Milton.' Before going to the University, Milton had given evidence of his poetical genius, and during his student years he seized upon many opportunities for turning this talent to account. Many of his academic exercises are preserved amongst his other works, and give evidence of his having possessed even then a capacity very far above his years. Besides his weakening eyesight, which some historians say he inherited from his mother to begin with, he was subject to headaches, which nevertheless did not deter him from assimilating vast stores of learning.

While yet a schoolboy, the future poet could write Latin and



Greek, either in prose or verse, and he also knew something of Hebrew. His reading had embraced the poems of Spenser and Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas. Amongst his boyish essays in verse were poetical paraphrases of the 114th and 136th Psalms.

It is said that during his course at Christ's College, Cambridge, a quarrel of some sort took place between the young poet and his tutor, and that the former had, in consequence, to leave his college for awhile. Though it has been maintained by some authorities that Milton never left his college at all, yet Dr. Johnson exaggerates the incident so far as to state that he was rusticated, and on the same page insinuates that he was flogged. Both these statements are, however, very generally discredited, the fact that the rod was not yet abolished as a means of correction from the Universities not being looked upon as sufficient evidence that Milton was subjected to the ignominy of its application. It is a still greater presumption to maintain, as some do, that he was the last student of a University to be thus dealt with. At this time his face was distinguished by a delicate beauty of complexion and outline which caused some of his fellow-students to nickname him 'The Lady of the College.'

Milton left his Alma Mater in 1632, and proceeded to his father's country house at Horton. The scrivener had, by careful attention to business, by this time amassed a considerable fortune, and could live in ease and comfort in his rural home. There the poet spent five calm and happy years, bringing to maturity that marvellous talent for poetic composition which placed him so far above any of his contemporaries, and in the front rank of the poets of all time. Up to then his greatest essay had been the *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, written in his twenty-first year. Its place is acknowledged to be 'among the finest specimens of lyrical poetry that any age or nation has produced.' The hymn contains twenty-seven verses, of which the following may serve as specimens :

But peaceful was the night,  
Wherein the Prince of light  
His reign of peace upon the earth began :  
The winds with wonder whist,  
Smoothly the waters kist,  
Whisp'ring new joys to the mild ocean,  
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,  
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave.



The stars with deep amaze  
 Stand fix'd in steadfast gaze,  
     Bending one way their precious influence,  
 And will not take their flight,  
 For all the morning light,  
     Or Lucifer that often warn'd them thence ;  
 But in their glimmering orbs did glow,  
 Until their Lord Himself bespake, and bid them go.  
  
 And though the shady gloom  
 Had given day her room,  
     The sun himself withheld his wonted speed,  
 And hid his head for shame,  
 As his inferior flame  
     The new-enlightened world no more should need ;  
 He saw a greater sun appear  
 Than his bright throne, or burning axle-tree could bear.  
  
 The shepherds on the lawn,  
 Or e'er the point of dawn,  
     Sat simply chatting in a rustic row ;  
 Full little thought they then,  
 That the mighty Pan  
     Was kindly come to live with them below ;  
 Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,  
 Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.  
  
 When such music sweet  
 Their hearts and ears did greet,  
     As never was by mortal finger strook,  
 Divinely-warbled voice  
 Answering the stringed noise,  
     As all their souls in blissful rapture took :  
 The air such pleasure loth to lose,  
 With thousand echoes still prolongs each heav'nly close.  
  
     \*           \*           \*           \*           \*  
 But see the Virgin blest  
 Hath laid her Babe to rest,  
     Time is our tedious song should here have end ng :  
 Heav'n's youngest teem'd star  
 Hath fix'd her polish'd car,  
     Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending  
 And all about the courtly stable  
 Bright harness'd Angels sit in order serviceable.

At an even earlier age he had given proof of his poetic genius by some paraphrases of the Psalms of David, and more particularly by his poem *On the Death of a Fair Infant*,<sup>1</sup> which was written in his seventeenth year, and begins :

O fairest flow'r, no sooner blown but blasted,  
     Soft silken primrose fading timelessly,  
 Summer's chief honour, if thou hadst out-last'd  
 Bleak Winter's force that made thy blossom dry ;  
 For he being amorous on that lovely dye  
     That did thy cheek envermeil, thought to kiss,  
 But kill'd, alas ! and then bewail'd his fatal bliss.

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<sup>1</sup> A niece of the poet's, daughter of his only sister.



A College Exercise, written at the age of eighteen, is also worthy of notice. We will quote a portion of it :

Hail, native Language, that by sinews weak  
Didst move my first endeavouring tongue to speak,  
And mad'st imperfect words with childish trips,  
Half-unpronounc'd, slide through my infant lips :

\* \* \* \* \*

I have some naked thoughts that rove about,  
And loudly knock to have their passage out ;  
And, weary of their place, do only stay  
Till thou hast deck'd them in thy best array.

During his five years at Horton, which seem to have been the happiest period of the poet's life, he wrote *Arcades*, the masque of *Comus*, the elegy on his friend King, entitled *Lycidas*, and, probably, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*.

An eloquent description of Milton's appearance at this time is given thus by Mr. Shaw : ' He was at this time eminently beautiful in person, though of a stature scarcely attaining the middle size ; but he relates with pride that he was remarkable for his bodily activity and his address in the use of the sword. During the whole of his life, indeed, the appearance of the poet was noble, almost ideal ; his face gradually exchanged a childish, seraphic beauty for the lofty expression of sorrow and sublimity which it bore in his blindness and old age. When young he was a type of his own angels, when old of a prophet, a patriot, and a saint.'

The death of his mother, which took place in 1637, dispelled much of the happiness which had endeared Horton to the poet, and soon afterwards, in 1638, he started upon a long Continental tour. During his fifteen months' absence from England he visited many of the chief places of interest in Italy and France. What he saw was perhaps less interesting and gratifying to his great mind than the great men of other nationalities with whom he was fortunate enough to come in contact. Amongst these were the Marquis of Villa, friend and biographer of Tasso, whom he met at Naples ; Galileo, old and blind, whom he visited at Florence ; and Hugo Grotius, the great Dutchman, whom he encountered in Paris. At Rome he heard the songs of Leonora Baroni. This period of travel was the finishing of a perfect education. The memory of the great Puritan poet was stored at this time with a wealth of classic thoughts and images which gave much of its vivid colouring to his later works. The influ-



ence of his Continental experience is shown in his *Italian Sonnets*. 'It was at Florence,' says Dr. Collier, in this connection, 'that the fair-cheeked Englishman met a beauty of Bologna, whose black eyes subdued his heart, and whose voice completed the conquest by binding it in silver chains—chains which it cost him a pang to break before he could tear himself away. After visiting Venice and Geneva, among other places, he returned by way of France to England. Amid all the license and vice of Continental life, as it then was, he passed pure and unstained, returning with the bloom of his young religious feelings unfaded, like the flush of English manhood on his cheek.'

It cannot be said with certainty when Milton's religious views began to lean towards Puritanism or Presbyterianism. *Lycidas* betrays some signs of this tendency, but the same cannot be said of all his minor works, some of which go so far as to give expression to sentiments with which Presbyterian views are scarcely compatible. It is known that his parents wished him to take Holy Orders, but he himself was decidedly averse to that idea, and for a time contemplated the law as a profession. But on his return from the Continent he took to teaching, and became tutor to John and Edward Philips, his sister's sons.

Johnson sneers at him for this, as 'a man who hastens home because his countrymen are contending for their liberty, and, when he reaches the scene of action, vapours away his patriotism in a private boarding-school.' But the poet himself considered that he was helping on the cause of his country in an effectual way on the principle laid down in the old saying :

Beneath the rule of men entirely great  
The pen is mightier than the sword.

He says of himself : 'I avoided the toil and danger of a military life, only to render my country assistance more useful, and not less to my own peril.' He considered that education is one of the greatest causes of prosperity and regeneration in nations.

In 1643 he married Mary Powell, the daughter of Mr. Richard Powell, a Justice of the Peace, of Foresthill, near Shotover, in Oxfordshire. The marriage proved unhappy at first. About a month after the union had taken place, she accepted an invitation from her relations to spend the summer months with them, and promised to return at Michaelmas. The appointed time



came and went, but she did not appear. Milton wrote to her, but received no answer. The reason for this strange conduct is not known, but it so annoyed her husband that he vowed he would never receive her again, and wrote his celebrated *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* by way of giving vent to his outraged feelings. She eventually returned, however, and they were reconciled, after a separation of three years. In the meantime he had actually begun to make advances to another lady, but the reconciliation was wonderfully complete under all the circumstances, and the reunited couple lived very happily together. Milton's treatise on Divorce had roused the resentment of the Presbyterian clergy, a fact which led, with other causes, to his separating himself from that party. When the party of the King was totally ruined, the poet very generously received his wife's relations into his home, and afforded them a protection which they were far from deserving at his hands.

In 1649, after the death of the King, he was appointed Latin Secretary to the Council of State. While holding this office his eyesight, which had long been declining in strength, completely failed. Mary, his wife, died in 1652, leaving him with three daughters, only one of whom—Deborah, the youngest—was a comfort and help to him. Touching stories are told of the way in which the blind poet dictated his verses to her, while she wrote them down, often at untimely hours. In 1658 he married Catherine, daughter of Captain Woodcock. She is said to have been the best-loved and most amiable of the poet's three wives, but she died within a year of the marriage. He wrote a Sonnet in her honour. In the year 1663 he married Elizabeth Minshul, who proved a most exemplary wife, and a protection from the rapacity of his daughters, who stole his trinkets and sold his books. During the latter years of his life he composed *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*.

The restoration of Charles II. brought to an end the trouble which followed the death of Oliver Cromwell, but it also brought about the poet's 'evil days.' The triumphant Royalists were not in a mood to be gracious to the regicide defender of the late King's execution, or to the Commonwealth Latin Secretary. But Milton had been merciful in the day of his ascendancy, and the recollection of this may possibly have been the saving of his life. Though compelled to conceal himself for a time, he



escaped ultimately with no other penalty than the loss of his office and a slight injury to his remaining fortune. The great poet was attacked by gout in the closing years of his life, and died in 1674, a monument being erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey in 1737. His body, however, lies buried in the chancel of the church of St. Giles, Cripplegate.

It must not be supposed that the transcendent genius of Milton was realized by the age in which he lived and wrote. Dr. Newton tells the following pitiful tale of the original price paid for *Paradise Lost*: 'Though Milton received not above ten pounds at two different payments for the copy of *Paradise Lost*, yet Mr. Hoyle, author of the treatise on the Game of Whist, after having disposed of all the first impressions, sold the copy to the bookseller, as I have been informed, for two hundred guineas.'

Milton was not unconscious of his own genius, as is shown by his description of the high ideals which he set before himself, and felt that he was capable of accomplishing. He tells us that he considered labour and study to be his portion in this life, in order that he 'might perhaps leave something so written in after-times as they should not willingly let it die . . . that what the greatest and choicest wits of Athens, Rome, or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old, did for their country, I, in my proportion, with this over and above of being a Christian, might do for mine.' Milton's minor poems would have been sufficient in themselves, without the aid of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, to proclaim their author a poet of the very first rank, and a worthy successor of the brilliant constellation of geniuses which had adorned the pages of English song before his day. *Comus* might be said to be unique in its character were it not for its close resemblance to the *Faithful Shepherdess* of Fletcher. Of these two poems, Milton's *Comus* has the higher moral inspiration, and as a literary composition is the more exact and elaborate. How exquisite is the Lady's song:

Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen  
 Within thy aery shell,  
 By slow Meander's margent green,  
 And in the violet-embroidered vale,  
 Where the love-lorn nightingale  
 Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well;  
 Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair  
 That liketh thy Narcissus are?



O, if thou have  
 Hid them in some flow'ry cave,  
 Tell me but where,  
 Sweet queen of parley, daughter of the sphere !  
 So may'st thou be translated to the skies,  
 And give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies.

A period of twenty-one years elapsed between the issue of his minor poems, in 1645, and the publication of *Paradise Lost*. This great masterpiece appeared, in ten books, in 1667. *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* were published in 1671. *Paradise Lost* may be fairly called the greatest of epic poems, superior not only to anything of the kind in the English language, but surpassing even the epics of Homer and Virgil. Dr. Craik does not hesitate to say that 'the First Book of this poem is probably the most splendid and perfect of human compositions—the one, that is to say, which unites these two qualities (richness and beauty) in the highest degree; and the Fourth is as unsurpassed for grace and luxuriance as that is for magnificence of imagination.'

As a writer of blank verse, Milton stands absolutely alone, no other writer of that form of poetry having approached within measurable distance of the excellence which his displays in every line. The greatest of critics must feel a certain awe in attempting to appraise *Paradise Lost*; indeed, the best qualified have admitted a certain consciousness that they were stepping in where angels would almost fear to tread. The theme of this poem is the noblest and grandest that any poet ever chose. It is not too much to say that to appreciate it fully is beyond the average mind. Imagination, assimilation, imitation, all these powers are pressed into the service of the master spirit. His capacity for appropriating the thoughts and images of those who preceded him in the field of literature is no less marvellous than is his power of so clothing them in new beauties of diction as to make them absolutely his own. Concerning this, which must always be considered his masterpiece, the following words of Mr. Spalding are eloquent, and none too strong :

'If we say that the theme is managed with a skill almost unequalled, the plan laid down and executed with extraordinary exactness of art, we make assertions which are due to the poet, but on the correctness of which few of his readers are qualified to judge. Like other great works, and in a higher degree than



most, the poem is oftenest studied and estimated by piecemeal only. Though it be so taken, and though its unbroken and weighty solemnity should at length have caused weariness, it cannot but have left a vivid impression on all minds not quite unsusceptible of fine influences. The stately march of its diction ; the organ-peal with which its versification rolls on ; the continual overflowing, especially in the earlier books, of beautiful illustrations from nature or art ; the clearly and brightly coloured pictures of human happiness and innocence ; the melancholy grandeur with which angelic natures are clothed in their fall—these are features, some or all of which must be delightful to most of us, and which give to the mind images and feelings not easily or soon effaced. If the poet has sometimes aimed at describing scenes over which should have been cast the veil of reverential silence, we should remember that this occurs but rarely. If other scenes and figures of a supernatural kind are invested with a costume which may seem to us unduly corporeal even for the poetic inventor, we should pause to recollect that the task thus attempted is one in which perfect success is unattainable ; and we shall ourselves, unless our fancy is cold indeed, be awed and dazzled, whether we will or not, by many of those very pictures.'

The composition of this great work was the abiding solace of those dark years which followed the Restoration, and the consequent obscurity of the life of the ex-Latin Secretary. The story is told that Thomas Ellwood, a young Quaker, used to come very frequently in the afternoons and read Latin to the blind poet. It was this friend who secured for him the cottage at Chalfont, in Buckinghamshire, where the Miltons found a haven of safety from the great Plague that visited London in 1665. During a visit which the Quaker, then a tutor in a rich family in the neighbourhood, paid to the poet after he had settled down in the cottage, Milton called for a manuscript, and handed it to Ellwood. It was the poem of *Paradise Lost*, recently finished. Ellwood read it through, and, in returning it to the poet, said : 'Thou hast said much here of *Paradise Lost*, but what hast thou to say of *Paradise Found*?' This question resulted in the composition of the companion epic, *Paradise Regained*. This is a shorter work than *Paradise Lost*, and consists of four books. Though it was preferred by Milton



himself to the previous work, it is certainly inferior both in interest and style. It describes the triumph of our Lord over the temptations of Satan, in a magnetic and graphic manner, and would have made the name of Milton great had it been his only claim to the title of poet.

Dr. Craik says : ' It is natural, in comparing, or contrasting, Milton's *Paradise Lost* with his *Paradise Regained*, to think of the two great Homeric epics : the *Iliad* commonly believed by antiquity to have proceeded from the inspired poet in the vigour and glow of his manhood or middle age, the *Odyssey* to reflect the milder radiance of his imagination in the afternoon or evening of his life. It has been common accordingly to apply to the case of the English poet also the famous similitude of Longinus, and to say that in *Paradise Regained* we have the Sun on his descent, the same indeed as ever in majesty (τὸ μέγεθος), but deprived of his overpowering ardour (δίχα τῆς σφοδρότητος). Some have gone further, not claiming for the *Paradise Regained* the honour of being sunshine at all, but only holding it worthy of being applauded in the spirit and after the fashion in which Pope has eulogized the gracious though not dazzling qualities of his friend, Martha Blount :

So, when the sun's broad beam has tired the sight,  
All mild ascends the Moon's more sober light ;  
Serene in virgin modesty she shines,  
And unobserved the glaring orb declines.

Milton himself says, ' Time serves not now, and, perhaps I might seem too profuse, to give any certain account of what the mind at home, in the spacious circuits of her musing, hath liberty to propose to herself, though of highest hope and hardest attempting ; whether that epic form, whereof the two poems of Homer, and those other two of Virgil and Tasso, are a diffuse, and the book of Job a brief, model.' Upon this passage and its context Mr. Charles Dunster bases a theory to the effect that Milton designed his *Paradise Regained* to be an example of the brief epic, as contrasted with the great epic, such as those of Homer and Virgil, setting before himself the book of Job as a model of the former style of poem.<sup>1</sup>

But the difference between the two works is easily explainable by the fact that the idea of the one was inspired by the Old

<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Regained*, with notes, by Charles Dunster, M.A., 1795, p. 2.



Testament and that of the other by the New. As such they have naturally much in common, but as naturally many differences, just as the New Testament itself is an embodiment of the fact that 'the former things are passed away.' The one is as distinctively Hebrew as the other is distinctively Christian. The fact that the poet preferred *Paradise Regained* to the greater epic is not easily accounted for, but it has been suggested that this is in keeping with his habit of being best pleased always with what he had most recently produced, a feeling which has been shared by many other writers.

Lord Macaulay pays the following eloquent tribute to the nobility of Milton's character :

'Venal and licentious scribblers, with just sufficient talent to clothe the thoughts of a pander in the style of a bellman, were now the favourite writers of the Sovereign and the public. It was a loathsome herd—which could be compared to nothing so fitly as the rabble of *Comus* ; grotesque monsters, half-bestial, half-human, dropping with wine, and reeling in obscene dances. Amidst these his muse was placed, like the Chaste Lady in the masque, lofty, spotless, and serene—to be chattered at, and pointed at, by the whole rabble of satyrs and goblins. If ever despondency and asperity could be excused in any man, it might have been excused in Milton. But the strength of his mind overcame every calamity. Neither blindness, nor gout, nor age, nor penury, nor domestic afflictions, nor political disappointments, nor abuse, nor proscription, nor neglect, had power to disturb his sedate and majestic patience. His spirits did not seem to have been high, but they were singularly equable. His temper was serious, perhaps stern ; but it was a temper which no sufferings could render sullen or fretful. Such as it was when, on the eve of great events, he returned from his travels in the prime of health and manly beauty, loaded with literary distinctions, and glowing with patriotic hopes—such it continued to be, when, after having experienced every calamity which is incident to our nature, old, poor, sightless, and disgraced, he retired to his hovel to die.'<sup>1</sup>

It was in this hovel that John Milton, who ranks in history with Homer, Virgil, and Dante as an epic poet, died one month before the completion of his sixty-sixth year. It was on Sunday,

<sup>1</sup> *Edinburgh Review*, vol. xlii., p. 323.



the 8th of November, 1674, that the end came. Beside the dust of his father, in the church of St. Giles, Cripplegate, his worn-out body was laid to rest.

FROM 'L'ALLEGRO'

THE MAN OF MIRTH

Hence, loathed Melancholy,  
Of Cerberus<sup>1</sup> and blackest Midnight born,  
In Stygian cave forlorn,  
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!  
Find out some uncouth cell,  
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,  
And the night-raven sings;  
There under ebon shades and low-brow'd rocks,  
As ragged as thy locks,  
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.  
But come, thou goddess fair and free,  
In heav'n yclep'd Euphrosyne,  
And by men, heart-easing Mirth;  
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,  
With two sister Graces<sup>2</sup> more,  
To ivy-crowned Bacchus bore.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee  
Jest and youthful Jollity,  
Quips and Cranks, and wanton Wiles,  
Nods, and Becks, and wreathed Smiles,  
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,  
And love to live in dimple sleek;  
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,  
And Laughter holding both his sides.

FROM 'IL PENSEROSO'

'THE MELANCHOLY MAN

Hence, vain deluding Joys,  
The brood of Folly, without father bred!  
How little you bestead,  
Or fill the fixed mind with all your toys!  
Dwell in some idle brain,  
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,  
As thick and numberless  
As the gay motes that people the sunbeams;  
Or likest hovering dreams,  
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.  
But hail, thou goddess, sage and holy,  
Hail, divinest Melancholy!  
Whose saintly visage is too bright  
To hit the sense of human sight,  
And therefore to our weaker view  
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue.

\* \* \* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Erebus, not Cerberus, was the legitimate husband of Night (T. Warton). Milton makes his own parentage for Melancholy.

<sup>2</sup> Meat and Drink, the two sisters of Mirth.—WARBURTON.



Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,  
 Sober, steadfast, and demure,  
 All in a robe of darkest grain,  
 Flowing with majestic train,  
 And sable stole<sup>1</sup> of Cyprus lawn,  
 Over thy decent shoulders drawn.  
 Come, but keep thy wonted state,  
 With even step and musing gait,  
 And looks commercing with the skies,  
 Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes :  
 There, held in holy passion still,  
 Forget thyself to marble, till  
 With a sad leaden downward cast  
 Thou fix them on the earth as fast :  
 And join with thee calm Peace, and Quiet,  
 Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,  
 And hears the Muses in a ring  
 Aye round about Jove's altar sing :  
 And add to these retired Leisure,  
 That in trim gardens takes his pleasure.

FROM 'PARADISE LOST'

ADDRESS TO LIGHT

Hail, holy Light, offspring of Heaven, first-born,  
 Or of th' Eternal co-eternal beam,  
 May I express thee unblam'd ? since God is light,  
 And never but in unapproached light,  
 Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee,  
 Bright effluence of bright essence increate  
 Or hear'st thou rather pure ethereal stream,  
 Whose fountain who shall tell ? Before the Sun,  
 Before the Heav'ns thou wert, and at the voice  
 Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest  
 The rising world of waters dark and deep.  
 Won from the void and formless infinite.  
 Thee I revisit now with bolder wing,  
 Escap'd the Stygian pool, though long detain'd  
 In that obscure sojourn, while, in my flight,  
 Through utter and through middle darkness borne,  
 With other notes than to th' Orphéan lyre,  
 I sung of Chaos and eternal Night ;  
 Taught by the heavenly Muse to venture down  
 The dark descent, and up to reascend,  
 Though hard and rare : thee I revisit safe,  
 And feel thy sovran vital lamp ; but thou  
 Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain  
 To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn ;  
 So thick a drop serene<sup>2</sup> hath quench'd their orbs,  
 Or dim suffusion veil'd. Yet not the more  
 Cease I to wander, where the Muses haunt  
 Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,  
 Smit with the love of sacred song ; but chief  
 Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks<sup>3</sup> beneath,

<sup>1</sup> The stole was ' a veil which covered the head and shoulders, worn only by such Roman matrons as were distinguished for their modesty.'

<sup>2</sup> Gutta Serena.

<sup>3</sup> Kedron and Siloam.



That wash thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow,  
 Nightly I visit : nor sometimes forget  
 Those other two, equall'd with me in fate,  
 So were I equall'd with them in renown,  
 Blind Thamyris,<sup>1</sup> and blind Mæonides,<sup>2</sup>  
 And Tiresias,<sup>3</sup> and Phineus,<sup>4</sup> prophets old :  
 Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move  
 Harmonious numbers ; as the wakeful bird  
 Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid,  
 Tunes her nocturnal note.

## EVENING IN PARADISE 7

Now came still Evening on, and Twilight gray  
 Had in her sober livery all things clad ;  
 Silence accompaied ; for beast and bird,  
 They to their grassy couch, these to their nests,  
 Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale ;  
 She all night long her amorous descant sung ;  
 Silence was pleas'd : now glow'd the firmament  
 With living sapphires : Hesperus, that led  
 The starry host, rode brightest, till the Moon,  
 Rising in clouded majesty, at length  
 Apparent queen, unveil'd her peerless light,  
 And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

(' I know of nothing parallel or comparable to this passage to be found among all the treasures of ancient or modern poetry.'—NEWTON.)

## TEMPERANCE

Well observe  
 The rule of *Not too much* ; by temperance taught,  
 In what thou eat'st and drink'st ; seeking from thence  
 Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight ;  
 Till many years over thy head return ;  
 So may'st thou live ; till, like ripe fruit, thou drop  
 Into thy mother's lap, or be with ease  
 Gather'd, not harshly pluck'd ; for death mature.  
 This is Old Age ; but then, thou must outlive  
 Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty, which will change  
 To wither'd, weak, and gray ; thy senses then,  
 Obtuse, all taste of pleasure must forego,  
 To what thou hast ; and, for the air of youth,  
 Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign  
 A melancholy damp of cold and dry  
 To weigh thy spirits down, and last consume  
 The balm of life.

<sup>1</sup> A Thracian poet, struck blind by the Muses for presumption in rivalling them.

<sup>2</sup> An appellation of Homer, from Mæonia, one of the places that laid claim to the honour of his birth.

<sup>3</sup> A celebrated Theban prophet.

<sup>4</sup> A King of Thrace or Bithynia, struck blind for prying into futurity.



## FROM 'PARADISE REGAINED'

## ATHENS

Look once more, ere we leave this specular mount,  
 Westward, much nearer by south-west, behold  
 Where on the Ægean shore a city stands,  
 Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil,—  
 Athens, the eye of Greece,<sup>1</sup> mother of arts  
 And eloquence, native to famous wits  
 Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,  
 City or suburban, studious walks and shades.  
 See there the olive grove of Academe,<sup>2</sup>  
 Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird<sup>3</sup>  
 Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long ;  
 There flowery hill Hymettus, with the sound  
 Of bees' industrious murmur, oft invites  
 To studious musing ; there Ilissus<sup>4</sup> rolls  
 His whisp'ring stream : within the walls, then view  
 The schools of ancient sages ; his,<sup>5</sup> who bred  
 Great Alexander to subdue the world ;  
 Lyceum there, and painted Stoa next :  
 There shalt thou hear and learn the secret power  
 Of harmony, in tones and numbers hit  
 By voice or hand, and various-measur'd verse,  
 Æolian charms and Dorian lyric odes ;  
 And his, who gave them breath, but higher sung,  
 Blind Melesigenes,<sup>6</sup> thence Homer call'd,  
 Whose poem Phœbus challeng'd for his own :  
 Thence what the lofty grave tragedians taught  
 In Chorus or Iambic, teachers best  
 Of moral prudence, with delight receiv'd  
 In brief sententious precepts, while they treat  
 Of fate, and chance, and change in human life ;  
 High actions and high passions best describing :  
 Thence to the famous orators repair,  
 Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence  
 Wielded at will that fierce democratie,  
 Shook the arsenal, and fulmin'd over Greece  
 To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne :  
 To sage Philosophy next lend thine ear,  
 From Heaven descended to the low-roofed house  
 Of Socrates : see there his tenement,  
 Whom well inspir'd the oracle pronounc'd  
 Wisest of men ; from whose mouth issued forth  
 Mellifluous streams, that water'd all the schools  
 Of academics old and new<sup>7</sup> with those

<sup>1</sup> Sparta and Athens were called the eyes of Greece.

<sup>2</sup> The school of Plato.

<sup>3</sup> The nightingale. Philomela, who was changed into this bird, was the daughter of Pandion, King of Athens.

<sup>4</sup> A stream near Athens.

<sup>5</sup> Aristotle, the founder of the Peripatetic sect, was Alexander's tutor.

<sup>6</sup> Homer was alleged to have been born on the banks of the river Meles, near Smyrna.

<sup>7</sup> Socrates was the instructor of Plato, the founder of the Academic School. Quintilian calls him *fons philosophorum*.



Surnamed Peripatetics, and the sect  
 Epicurean, and the Stoic severe.  
 These here revolve, or, as thou lik'st, at home,  
 Till time mature thee to a kingdom's weight ;  
 These rules will render thee a king complete  
 Within thyself, much more with empire join'd.

## A SONNET

ON HIS BEING ARRIVED TO THE AGE OF  
 TWENTY-THREE

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,  
 Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year !  
 My hasting days fly on with full career,  
 But my late spring no bud or blossom show'th.  
 Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,  
 That I to manhood am arriv'd so near,  
 And inward ripeness doth much less appear,  
 That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.  
 Yet, be it less or more, or soon or slow,  
 It shall be still in strictest measure even  
 To that same lot, however mean or high,  
 Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven ;  
 All is, if I have grace to use it so,  
 As ever in my great Task-master's eye.

## SAMUEL BUTLER

1612-1680

SAMUEL BUTLER is unquestionably the greatest literary representative of the Cavaliers, as Milton is the greatest of the Puritans. These two names are very fitly coupled together. Though the character of their respective works is vastly different, each was possessed of an amount of general learning seldom vouchsafed to an individual mind. Butler became famous after the restoration of Charles II., when that event had thrown the Puritans into the shade. He had seen the bloody drama of the Revolution played out. During that chequered period of history he had been brought into very close contact with both Round-heads and Cavaliers. He was fifty-one years of age when his burlesque poem of *Hudibras*, the greatest of its kind in the English language, was given to the world, and 'cast even deeper ridicule on the men of the steeple-hat and the sad-coloured dress than all the studied mockeries of a plumed and ringleted court could do.'

Samuel Butler was of humble origin. His father was a poor



but respectable farmer who cultivated a few acres of land in the parish of Strensham, in Worcestershire. The future poet first saw the light in 1612. His career is wrapt in much obscurity, but it is known that his first schooling was obtained at Worcester Free School. Some accounts state that he resided for awhile at Cambridge, though there is no existing proof that he ever matriculated at that or any other University. In his early manhood he resided for some years at Earl's Croombe, acting as clerk to a Justice of the Peace named Jeffreys, or Jeffries. Doubtless he used his opportunities during this period to the best advantage, and laid up a store of legal knowledge. Later on he was fortunate enough to obtain admission to the household—though in what capacity history does not clearly state—of the Countess of Kent. It is thought that this appointment, whatever its nature may have been, was largely due to the influence of Selden, who managed the household of this noble lady, and is said by some to have been secretly married to her. In the splendid library of the Countess's mansion Butler found opportunities of improving his mind, which he did not fail to turn to the best possible account. During this period of his life also he enjoyed social intercourse with a class of people which included many accomplished and learned men and women. His life as a whole was not a happy one, and this was certainly one of the few bright spots in it.

We find him next acting in the capacity of tutor or clerk in the household of Sir Samuel Luke, a very wealthy and powerful republican Member of Parliament. Sir Samuel was a Presbyterian and a Puritan, holding the office of Scout-master under Cromwell. Though the atmosphere of this household must have been by no means congenial to Butler's tastes, yet it was amidst such surroundings that he conceived the ideas which he subsequently embodied in his inimitable satire.

Another break occurs in the known history of the poet, and then he reappears as Secretary to Lord Carbury, the President of Wales, in which capacity he held the office of Steward of Ludlow Castle, where the *Comus* of Milton had been presented before Lord Bridgewater. But the poet did not hold this post for long. About this time he married a lady with some private means, but the money was lost soon afterwards through the failure of the securities, and Butler was as poor as—or poorer than—before. It was at this juncture that he published the first part of *Hudi-*



*bras*. After its appearance, he may indeed be said to have awaked and found himself famous, but little more than that. He made no money to speak of by the work, though the King himself carried a copy of it about with him, and admired it, quoting it freely in conversation with his friends. Though the author of the most popular book of the time, Samuel Butler died in extreme poverty in a wretched tenement in Rose Street, Covent Garden, in the year 1680, a dejected and disappointed man.

*Hudibras* is acknowledged by the best critics to be the greatest burlesque poem in the English language, and on it rests Butler's chief claim to immortality. It is a satire on the absurdities and vices of the Presbyterians and Independents, who were the two dominant sects of the fanatic or republican party. The poem is written in the short tetrameter line, and teems throughout with flashes of wit and drollery which are quite unrivalled.

The idea of the poem is clearly borrowed from Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, though there is no actual resemblance between the two works. Butler's satire is thoroughly English in conception, style, and treatment from beginning to end. It is unfinished, and its plan is desultory, a fact which is easily accounted for by the spaces of time which elapsed between the publication of the first and second and the second and third parts. Sir Hudibras, a Presbyterian knight (of whom Sir Samuel Luke is supposed to have been the prototype), and his clerk, Squire Ralpho, go forth to search for adventures in much the same way as did Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. Their aim is to put a stop to the amusements of the common people, against whom the Rump Parliament had passed many oppressive acts. The Puritan manners, the quarrels, loves, and misadventures of master and man are spread in a highly ludicrous manner over nine cantos. The style of versification, and the name of the hero, are taken from the old Anglo-Norman Trouvère poets, and the legends of the Round Table.

Mr. Shaw concludes a powerful dissertation on *Hudibras* with the following eulogistic words: 'The poem is crowded with allusions to particular persons and events of the Civil War and the Commonwealth; and consequently its merits can be fully appreciated only by those who are acquainted with the minute history of the epoch, for which reason Butler is eminently one of those authors who require to be studied



with a commentary; yet the mere ordinary reader, though many delicate strokes will escape him, may gather from *Hudibras* a rich harvest of wisdom and of wit. However specific be the direction of much of the satire, a very large proportion will always be applicable as long as there exist in the world hypocritical pretenders to sanctity, and quacks in politics or learning. Many of the scenes and conversation are universal portraitures: as, for example, the consultation with the lawyer, the dialogues on love and marriage with the lady, the scenes with Sidrophel, and a multitude of others. From Butler's writings alone there would be no difficulty in drawing abundant illustrations of all the varieties of wit enumerated in Barrow's famous enumeration: the "pat allusion to a known story, the seasonable application of a trivial saying; the playing in words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense, or the affinity of their sound. Sometimes it is wrapped in a dress of humorous expression; sometimes it lurks under an old similitude; sometimes it is lodged in a sly question, in a smart answer, in a quirkish reason, in a shrewd intimation, in cunningly diverting or cleverly retorting an objection; sometimes it is couched in a bold scheme of speech, in a tart irony, in a lusty hyperbole, in a startling metaphor, in a plausible reconciling of contradictions, or in acute nonsense; sometimes an affected simplicity, sometimes a presumptuous bluntness, giveth it being; sometimes it riseth only from a lucky hitting upon what is strange, sometimes from a crafty wresting obvious matter to the purpose."'

It has been truly said that the perusal of *Hudibras* is diet so solid, that it should be taken by little at a time. It is a work whose epigrammatic practical wisdom has woven itself into the phraseology of the language.

#### SIR HUDIBRAS AND HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

When civil dudgeon first grew high,  
And men fell out, they knew not why,  
When hard words, jealousies, and fears,  
Set folks together by the ears;

\* \* \* \*

When gospel-trumpeter, surrounded  
With long-eared rout, to battle sounded,  
And pulpit, drum ecclesiastic,  
Was beat with fist, instead of a stick;  
Then did Sir Knight abandon dwelling,  
And out he rode a colonelling.



A wight he was, whose very sight would  
 Entitle him Mirror of Knighthood ;  
 That never bowed his stubborn knee  
 To anything but Chivalry ;  
 Nor put up blow but that which laid  
 Right worshipful on shoulder-blade :  
 Chief of domestic knights and errant,  
 Either for cartel or for warrant,  
 Great on the bench, great in the saddle,  
 That could as well bind o'er, as swaddle ;<sup>1</sup>  
 Mighty he was at both of these,  
 And styled of war as well as peace.  
 (So some rats, of amphibious nature,  
 Are either for the land or water.)  
 But here our authors make a doubt.  
 Whether he were more wise or stout ;  
 Some hold the one and some the other ;  
 But howso'er thy make a pother,  
 The difference was so small, his brain  
 Outweighed his rage but half a grain ;  
 Which made some take him for a tool  
 That knaves do work with, called a fool.

\* \* \* \*

We grant, although he had much wit,  
 He was very shy of using it ;  
 As being loth to wear it out,  
 And therefore bore it not about,  
 Unless on holidays or so,  
 As men their best apparel do.  
 Beside, 'tis known he could speak Greek  
 As naturally as pigs squeak,  
 That Latin was no more difficile  
 Than to a blackbird 'tis to whistle :  
 Being rich in both, he never scanted  
 His bounty unto such as wanted ;  
 But much of either would afford  
 To many that had not one word.

\* \* \* \*

He was in logic a great critic,  
 Profoundly skilled in analytic ;  
 He could distinguish and divide  
 A hair 'twixth south and south-west side :  
 On either which he would dispute,  
 Confute, change hands, and still confute ;  
 He'd undertake to prove, by force  
 Of argument, a man's no horse ;  
 He'd prove a buzzard is no fowl,  
 And that a lord may be an owl ;  
 A calf, an alderman ; a goose, a justice ;  
 And rooks, committee-men and trustees.  
 He'd run in debt by disputation,  
 And pay with ratiocination.  
 All this by syllogism, true  
 In mood and figure, he would do.  
 For rhetoric—he could not ope  
 His mouth but out there flew a trope.

---

<sup>1</sup> That is, to *beat*, or *cudgel*.



And when he happened to break off  
 I' th' middle of his speech, or cough,  
 H'had hard words ready to show why,  
 And tell what rules he did it by ;  
 Else, when with greatest art he spoke,  
 You'd think he talked like other folk ;  
 For all a rhetorician's rules  
 Teach nothing but to name his tools.  
 But, when he pleased to show't, his speech  
 In loftiness of sound was rich ;  
 A Babylonish<sup>1</sup> dialect,  
 Which learned pedants much affect.  
 It was a parti-coloured dress  
 Of patched and piebald languages ;  
 'Twas English cut on Greek and Latin,  
 As fustian heretofore on satin.  
 It had an odd promiscuous tone,  
 Like if he had talked three parts in one ;  
 Which made some think, when he did gabble,  
 Th' had heard three labourers of Babel,  
 Or Cerberus himself pronounce  
 A leash of languages at once.

#### FROM THE 'GENUINE REMAINS.'<sup>2</sup>

Who would believe that wicked earth,  
 Where nature only brings us forth  
 To be found guilty and forgiven,  
 Should be a nursery for heaven ;  
 When all we can expect to do  
 Will not pay half the debt we owe,  
 And yet more desperately dare,  
 As if that wretched trifle were  
 Too much for the eternal powers,  
 Our great and mighty creditors,  
 Not only slight what they enjoin,  
 But pay it in adulterate coin ?  
 We only in their mercy trust,  
 To be more wicked and unjust :  
 All our devotions, vows, and prayers,  
 Are our own interest, not theirs :  
 Our offerings when we come t' adore,  
 But begging presents, nothing more :  
 The purest business of our zeal  
 Is but to err by meaning wele,  
 And make that meaning do more harm  
 Than our worst deeds that are less warm :  
 For the most wretched and perverse  
 Doth not believe himself he errs.

<sup>1</sup> Babylonish dresses were distinguished by variety and glitter of ornaments.

<sup>2</sup> *Genuine Remains*, in verse and prose, were published by Mr. Thyer, in 1759, from manuscripts left in possession of Mr. Longueville, Butler's friend.



## JOHN DRYDEN

*Circa 1631<sup>1</sup>–1700*

‘Of the great poet whose life I am now about to delineate,’ says Dr. Johnson at the beginning of his exhaustive sketch, ‘the curiosity which his reputation must excite will require a display more ample than can now be given. His contemporaries, however they revered his genius, left his life unwritten; and nothing therefore can be known beyond what casual mention and uncertain tradition have supplied.’

From such sources of information may be gathered the following details of the life and writings of one who has been described as ‘the literary chief of the whole interval between Cromwell and Queen Anne.’

John Dryden was born probably at Aldwincle, in Northamptonshire, on the 9th of August, 1631. His father was Erasmus Dryden, of Tichmersh, and his grandfather Sir Erasmus Dryden, Bart., of Canons Ashby. Going still further back, his family is said to have originally sprung from the county of Huntingdon.

Derrick tells us that he was brought up as an Anabaptist, and inherited from his father an estate of two hundred a year. ‘For either of these particulars no authority is given. Such a fortune ought to have secured him from that poverty which seems always to have oppressed him; or, if he had wasted it, to have made him ashamed of publishing his necessities. But though he had many enemies, who undoubtedly examined his life with a scrutiny sufficiently malicious, I do not remember that he is ever charged with waste of his patrimony. He was indeed sometimes reproached for his first religion. I am therefore inclined to believe that Derrick’s intelligence was partly true, and partly erroneous.’

Erasmus Dryden had fourteen children, of whom John was the eldest. The future poet was placed at Westminster School, under the care of the celebrated Dr. Busby, where he was educated as one of the King’s scholars. In 1650 he was fortunate enough to win a Westminster scholarship at Cambridge, and accordingly proceeded to Trinity College, where he graduated B.A. in 1653.

While at school, he wrote a poem on the death of Lord Hastings;

<sup>1</sup> The inscription on his monument in Westminster Abbey is ‘Natus 1632. Mortuus Maij 1, 1700.’



who had fallen a victim to small-pox. Referring to the marks which that disorder produces on the human frame, the boy-poet says :

No comet need foretell his change drew on,  
Whose corps might seem a constellation.

But his earliest poem of any particular merit consisted of a set of 'heroic stanzas' on the death of Cromwell. So excellent are these that one easily detects in them the promise of future greatness, which was so abundantly fulfilled in the poet's subsequent writings. The following verses are examples of this early effort :

His grandeur he deriv'd from Heaven alone,  
For he was great ere fortune made him so ;  
And wars, like mists that rise against the sun,  
Made him but greater seem, not greater grow.

Nor was he like those stars that only shine  
When to pale mariners they storms portend ;  
He had his calmer influence, and his mien  
Did love and majesty together blend.

On the restoration of the monarchy, Dryden, 'like the other panegyrists of usurpation,' changed his views, and broke with the Puritans. He published *Astræa Redux*, 'a poem on the happy restoration and return of his most sacred Majesty King Charles the Second,' and another in praise of the Lord Chancellor. Thenceforth he attached himself to the Royalist party, it may have been from motives of ambition. However that may be, it is certain that the spirit of the Royalists was an atmosphere far more congenial to his own character than ever that of Puritanism could have been. He also wrote a *Panegyric on the Coronation* at this period. These works were quite as remarkable for their political servility as for their poetical merits. He has been blamed with considerable harshness for his change of politics, but we may safely accredit him with feeling, as was generally felt at the time, that 'a load of fear had rolled away when Charles came back from exile to fill his father's throne.' The taste and tendencies of the age of this monarch, moreover, gave a new tone to English literature, and Dryden became the chief writer in whose works this new feature was embodied. 'Dryden's veerings in religion, politics, criticism, and taste, over his whole life, exhibit a mind owning, with true poetical fidelity, the dominion of impulse. His scholarship was various and undigested ; his opinions the product of circumstances or passion ; his taste too often the reflection of his



interest or his prejudices ; and his religion, in his youth, that of a mind borne about by every wind of doctrine. On this last subject he himself thus speaks in *The Hind and Panther* :

“ My thoughtless youth was winged with vain desires,  
My manhood, long misled by wandering fires,  
Follow'd false lights ; and, when their glimpse was gone,  
My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.  
Such was I. Such by nature still I am.”

With all this, there is in Dryden's writings so much hearty earnestness in whatever he asserts, such an English manliness in the expression of apology or gratitude, that we cannot believe him to have been one who coolly calculated how much inconsistency or adulation was worth. For the latter he is not more to blame than many of that age, whose honesty has been much less a subject of question.'

One of the most conspicuous results of the Restoration was a popular revival of the drama, but, unhappily, on the French model. Dryden, now a Court poet, allowed his own natural bent to be diverted from its course by the degenerate taste of the times in which he lived. Though, like Milton, he had early conceived the idea of a great epic poem on the doings of King Arthur and his knights, he abandoned the project, and became a dramatist. Upon his own confession, he wrote only one, *All for Love*, in accordance with his own taste, all the others being creatures of circumstances which did not tend to elevate their tone. The date of his first play cannot be stated with positive certainty, but Johnson thinks it may be fairly assumed that he began to write for the stage in 1663, the thirty-second year of his age. His first play was a comedy called *The Wild Gallant*. It met with such severe criticism that he was compelled to recall it, and alter it from its imperfect state to that in which it may now be read, and which is yet defective enough to justify the critics in condemning it. This work was followed by *The Rival Ladies* and *The Indian Emperor*, and a number of other tragedies and comedies which it would be superfluous to mention in detail. They are almost entirely forgotten, though many passages might be selected from them which give full proof of the poetical genius of their author. *The Rival Ladies* was dedicated to the Earl of Orrery, who was himself a writer of rhyming tragedies, and, it is thought, the first to introduce that class of drama which came into vogue soon after the Restoration.



In the year 1663 the poet married Lady Elizabeth Howard, but this alliance did not contribute to his happiness. A daughter of the Earl of Berkshire, this lady was of a sour and querulous disposition, and her unpleasant relationships with Dryden are thought to be in no small measure accountable for his misogynistic views, which find expression in his works from time to time.

It was in 1667 that he published *Annus Mirabilis*, or the *Year of Wonders*, one of his greatest works. It is written in quatrains, the 'peculiar four-lined stanza which Davenant had employed in his poem of *Gondibert*,' a poem which Dryden thought to be the most majestic in the English language. It is intended to commemorate the great calamities of the previous year, the Fire of London, and the war with the Dutch. In its beauty and vigour it gives abundant proof that its author was entitled to the honour which was conferred on him by his appointment to the vacant post of Laureate in 1670, on the death of Davenant, and the salary of £200 which appertained to that office. Sir Walter Scott thus speaks of Dryden's degeneracy as a Court poet :

And Dryden in immortal strain,  
Had raised the table round again,  
But that a ribald king and court  
Bade him play on to make them sport,  
The world defrauded of the high design,  
Profaned the God-given strength and marr'd the lofty line.

In November, 1681, appeared the first part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, which may be said to be the most extraordinary political poem in this or any other language. Under the thin disguise of Hebrew names, he portrays the characters of the chief men of the two parties in the State, of course magnifying those attached to the Court, while he overwhelms their opponents with the most fearful invective, or lacerates them with poignant ridicule. No matter what may be our opinion as to his fairness, we cannot fail to admire the marvellous cleverness which the poet displays. It may be that the likeness might be more faithful, but there can be no two opinions as to the masterly execution of the artist. So great was the success of the poem that Dryden—'to whom, in spite of his affected contempt for the opinion of the world, the incense of applause was as the breath of life'—followed it up with another satire entitled *The Medal*, in which he again portrayed the character of Shaftesbury with a happy malice that must have been as gall and wormwood to the original. The



Whig poets made answer to both attacks, though with less wit than zeal. Shadwell and Little were the chief defenders of the Whig cause. They lived to regret their advocacy. Dryden again came to the contest with *Mac Flecknoe*, in which he concentrated on their unlucky heads, especially Shadwell's, the wrath which would have been scorching even if diffused amongst the whole crowd of confederates. The scathing criticisms were couched in lines like these :

Others to some faint meaning make pretence,  
But Shadwell never deviates into sense.

Shadwell was further chastised in a passage in the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, 'the body of which was written with considerable spirit by Nahum Tate.'

Abandoning satire for the nonce, Dryden now took up the weapon of argument, and produced a long poem entitled *Religio Laici*, in which he made a confession of his own creed, and made a strong plea for the orthodoxy of the Church.

The death of King Charles, in 1685, seems to have been favourable to Dryden's circumstances, since in the reign of that monarch the poet's pension had been ill paid. Amongst the crowd of sycophants who hastened to sacrifice to the 'rising sun,' Dryden distinguished himself by his *Threnodia Augustalis*, a gratulatory poem of considerable merit. He also embraced the Roman faith. 'Much has been said to justify this change of profession, but the best excuse that can be given is, that he who doubts the truth of all religions, and is indifferent to religion itself, can be guilty of no crime in assuming the most convenient.' The change was rewarded by an additional grant of £100 a year, in return for which he gave to the State and the world a long poem entitled *The Hind and Panther*, in which the Roman Catholic Church is typified by a milk-white hind, the Church of England as a panther, and the various other religious bodies as wolves, bears, boars, foxes, etc.

After the Revolution, Dryden was compelled to resign all his pensions and places, and it was only by his own prudence that his life was preserved. He again resorted to the drama for subsistence, and in the four following years he produced *Don Sebastian*, *King Arthur*, *Amphitryon*, *Cleomenes*, and *Love Triumphant*, his last play, which was acted in 1692, with but little success. *Don Sebastian* is the best of his dramatic works.



From this period he produced nothing until, in 1697, he gave to the world his great translation of Virgil's *Æneid*. Pope calls this 'the most noble and spirited in any language.' Soon afterwards the world was astonished by the appearance of *Alexander's Feast*. A great deal of controversy has raged round this magnificent ode, the difference of opinion being as regards the actual time spent in its composition. There seems to be fairly conclusive evidence that it was written in a single night. The unity of the piece, the consecutiveness and close connection of the trains of thought, and the fervency of spirit which animates the whole work, lend themselves to this conclusion. His last work of any consequence was a collection of *Fables*, modernizations of Chaucer, to which he added a version of the first book of *Homer*, whom he had some thought of translating.

Dryden's smaller pieces, comprising prologues, epilogues, epitaphs, elegies, and lyrics, have been collected by Sir Walter Scott, and published in his edition of the poet's works.

After a long life of unremitting toil and anxiety, which was embittered by pecuniary difficulties and literary feuds, he died, on the 1st of May, 1700, of mortification brought on by an inflammation in one of his toes. He breathed his last in an obscure lodging in Gerard Street, London. His medical attendant had proposed amputation, but the poet declined this remedy. He was sensible almost to the last, and died professing his faith in the Roman Catholic Church. His body was embalmed, and lay in state in the Physicians' Hall, where a funeral oration was pronounced over his remains by Sir Samuel Garth, physician and poet, after which they were conveyed to Westminster Abbey, preceded by a band of music. He was buried between the graves of Chaucer and Cowley. Some time after his decease the Duke of Buckingham placed a simple pedestal near his grave, inscribed 'J. Dryden.' The following epitaph by Pope was originally intended for his tomb :

This Sheffield raised—the sacred dust below  
Was Dryden once ; the rest, who does not know ?

This was afterwards discarded for the plain inscription mentioned above. A bust by Scheemakers was subsequently added.

There are few poets of whose lives and works so much has been written that is interesting and instructive. Johnson's biography of Dryden will always be read with pleasure. Sir Walter Scott's



edition of his works, in sixteen volumes, is enriched with copious notes and just critical observations ; and Campbell has displayed his refined taste in the remarks he has made on the character of Dryden's poetical compositions. Among his biographers, it would be unjust to omit the name of Malone, who, in his edition of the poet's works, has exhibited the deepest research and the most indefatigable industry in narrating the many striking incidents of his life and the history of the time in which he lived. As a dramatist, a lyrical poet, a satirist, a translator, and a philosopher, Dryden has been shown by all to be one of the most eminent of our English classics.

Speaking of the writings of Dryden, and of his style as exemplified, for instance, in the lines on the character of the Duke of Buckingham, Mr. Chambers says : ' The difference between the style of versification here exemplified, and that which flourished in earlier times, cannot fail to be remarked. The poets antecedent to the Commonwealth, especially Spenser, Shakespeare, Drayton, and the dramatists of the reign of James I., uttered sentiments, described characters, and painted external nature, with a luxuriant negligence and freedom, occasionally giving way to coarseness and conceit ; and though apparently unable at any time to perceive when they were writing effectively or otherwise, they were always easy, and frequently very happy. They formed nothing like what is called a *school of writers*, for they had hardly any rules to be acquired. The Commonwealth, with its religious and political troubles, may be said to have put an end to this class of poets. Those who sprung up in the ensuing period studied as their model the stately and regular versification that prevailed in France, to which they were introduced by the adherents of the Court, who had endured a long exile in that country. This new method was introduced with the imposing character of the style of civilized Europe, as regulated by the most authoritative rules of antiquity, while the old English manner, which had no followers on the Continent, was regarded as something too homely for polished society. Tenderness and fancy were now exchanged for satire and sophistry ; lines, rugged, perhaps, but sparkling with rich thought and melting with genuine feeling, gave place to smooth, accurate, monotonous epic couplets, in which the authors would have been ashamed to display any profound sentiment or any idea of startling novelty. The very sub-



jects of poetry were different from what they had been. The new order of writers, men of scholarly education and accustomed to live in fashionable society, applied themselves to describe the artificial world of manners, to flatter or satirize their contemporaries ; or, if they at times ventured upon anything connected with rural nature, it was not till they had disguised it under a set of cold, lifeless images borrowed from the pastorals of antiquity. The nymphs and swains of this class of poets were like the nymphs and swains of a masquerade, well-bred people dressed in good clothes rather fancifully made. The former were Delias, or Chloes, or Corinnas ; the latter Damons, or Strephons, or Cymons. They might have the crook or the milk-pail in their hands, but they had not human nature in their hearts, nor its language upon their tongues. The most lively and poetical objects had to submit to a colder kind of nomenclature at the hands of these poets. The sun obtained the classic appellation of Phœbus. The flowers could not be alluded to otherwise than as the offsprings of the goddess Flora ; the north wind was personified under the doubly freezing epithet of Boreas ; and a voyage could not be performed unless by special favour of Neptune and his Tritons.'

#### VENI CREATOR

Creator Spirit ! by whose aid  
The world's foundations first were laid,  
Come, visit every pious mind ;  
Come, pour thy joys on human kind ;  
From sin and sorrow set us free,  
And make thy temples worthy Thee.

O source of uncreated light,  
The Father's promised Paraclete !  
Thrice holy fount, thrice holy fire,  
Our hearts with heavenly love inspire ;  
Come, and thy sacred unction bring,  
To sanctify us while we sing.

Plenteous of grace, descend from high,  
Rich in thy sevenfold energy !  
Thou strength of His Almighty hand,  
Whose power does heaven and earth command ;  
Proceeding Spirit, our defence,  
Who dost the gifts of tongues dispense,  
And crown'st thy gifts with eloquence !

Refine and purge our earthly parts ;  
But, oh inflame and fire our hearts !  
Our frailties help, our vice control,  
Submit the senses to the soul ;  
And when rebellious they are grown,  
Then lay thine hand, and hold them down.



Chase from our minds the eternal foe,  
 And peace, the fruit of love, bestow ;  
 And, lest our feet should step astray.  
 Protect and guide us in the way.  
 Make us eternal truths receive,  
 And practise all that we believe :  
 Give us thyself, that we may see  
 The Father, and the Son, by Thee.

Immortal honour, endless fame,  
 Attend the Almighty Father's name !  
 The Saviour Son be glorified,  
 Who for lost man's redemption died !  
 And equal adoration be,  
 Eternal Paraclete, to Thee.

FROM 'ALL FOR LOVE'

CLEOPATRA ON THE CYDNUS

ACT III., SCENE I

Her galley down the silver Cydnus rowed,  
 The tackling silk, the streamers waved with gold ;  
 The gentle winds were lodged in purple sails :  
 Her nymphs, like Nereides, round her couch were placed ;  
 Where she, another sea-born Venus, lay.

\* \* \* \* \*

She lay, and leant her cheek upon her hand,  
 And cast a look so languishingly sweet,  
 As if, secure of all beholders' hearts,  
 Neglecting, she could take them ; boys, like cupids,  
 Stood fanning, with their painted wings, the winds  
 That played about her face ; but if she smiled,  
 A darting glory seemed to blaze abroad,  
 That men's desiring eyes were never wearied,  
 But hung upon the object. To soft flutes  
 The silver oars kept time ; and while they played,  
 The hearing gave new pleasure to the sight,  
 And both to thought. 'Twas heaven, or somewhat more ;  
 For she so charmed all hearts, that gazing crowds  
 Stood panting on the shore, and wanted breath  
 To give their welcome voice.

ALEXANDER'S FEAST

AN ODE IN HONOUR OF ST. CECILIA'S DAY.<sup>1</sup>

'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won  
 By Philip's warlike son ;  
 Aloft in awful state  
 The godlike hero sate  
 On his imperial throne :  
 His valiant peers were plac'd around ;  
 Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound,  
 (So should desert in arms be crown'd),

<sup>1</sup> St. Cecilia's Day is observed on November 22. Her saintship was acknowledged as early as the fifth century.



The lovely Thais, by his side,  
 Sate, like a blooming eastern bride,  
 In flower of youth and beauty's pride.  
     Happy, happy, happy pair !  
     None but the brave,  
     None but the brave,  
     None but the brave deserves the fair.

Timotheus, plac'd on high  
 Amid the tuneful quire,  
 With flying fingers touch'd the lyre :  
 The trembling notes ascend the sky,  
 And heavenly joys inspire.  
 The song began from Jove,  
 Who left his blissful seats above,  
 (Such is the power of mighty love.  
 A dragon's fiery form belied the god,  
 Sublime on radiant spires he rode  
 When he to fair Olympia press'd.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

And stamp'd an image of himself, a sovereign of the world.  
 The listening crowd admire the sound,  
 A present deity ! they shout around :  
 A present deity ! the vaulted roofs rebound :  
     With ravish'd ears  
     The monarch hears,  
     Assumes the god,  
     Affects to nod,  
     And seems to shake the spheres.

The praise of Bacchus then, the sweet musician sung :  
 Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young :  
     The jolly god in triumph comes ;  
     Sound the trumpets ; beat the drums ;  
     Flush'd with a purple grace,  
     He shows his honest face ;  
 Now give the hautboys breath : he comes ! he comes !  
     Bacchus, ever fair and young,  
     Drinking joys did first ordain ;  
     Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,  
     Drinking is the soldier's pleasure :  
         Rich the treasure,  
         Sweet the pleasure ;  
     Sweet is pleasure after pain.

Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain ;  
 Fought all his battles o'er again ;  
 And thrice he routed all his foes ; and thrice he slew the slain.  
 The master saw the madness rise  
 His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes ;  
 And, while he Heaven and Earth defied,  
 Chang'd his hand, and check'd his pride.  
     He chose a mournful Muse,  
     Soft pity to infuse :  
 He sung Darius great and good,  
     By too severe a fate  
 Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,  
 Fallen from his high estate,  
     And welt'ring in his blood ;  
 Deserted, at his utmost need,  
 By those his former bounty fed.



On the bare earth expos'd he lies,  
 With not a friend to close his eyes.  
 With downcast eyes the joyless victor sate.  
 Revolving in his alter'd soul

The various turns of Chance below ;  
 And, now and then, a sigh he stole,  
 And tears began to flow.

The mighty master smil'd, to see  
 That love was in the next degree :  
 'Twas but a kindred sound to move,  
 For pity melts the mind to love.

Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,  
 Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.

War, he sung, is toil and trouble ;

Honour, but an empty bubble ;

Never ending, still beginning ;

Fighting still, and still destroying ;

If the world be worth thy winning,

Think, O think it worth enjoying :

Lovely Thais sits beside thee,

Take the good the gods provide thee :

The many rend the skies with loud applause ;

So Love was crown'd, but Music won the cause.

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,

Gaz'd on the fair

Who caus'd his care,

And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,

Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again :

At length, with love and wine at once oppress'd,

The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast.

Now strike the golden lyre again :

A louder yet, and yet a louder strain.

Break his bands of sleep asunder,

And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder.

Hark! hark! the horrid sound

Has raised up his head,

As awak'd from the dead,

And, amaz'd, he stares around.

'Revenge! revenge!' Timotheus cries.

'See the Furies arise :

See the snakes that they rear,

How they hiss in their hair,

And the sparkles that flash from their eyes .

Behold a ghastly band,

Each a torch in his hand !

Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain,

And unburied remain

Inglorious on the plain :

Give the vengeance due

To the valiant crew !

Behold how they toss their torches on high,

How they point to the Persian abodes,

And glittering temples of their hostile gods !'

The princes applaud, with a furious joy ;

And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy :

Thais led the way,

To light him to his prey,

And, like another Helen, fir'd another Troy.



Thus, long ago,  
 Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,  
 While organs yet were mute ;  
 Timotheus, to his breathing flute  
 And sounding lyre,  
 Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.  
 At last divine Cecilia came,  
 Inventress of the vocal frame ;  
 The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store  
 Enlarg'd the former narrow bounds,  
 And added length to solemn sounds,  
 With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.  
 Let old Timotheus yield the prize,  
 Or both divide the crown ;  
 He rais'd a mortal to the skies,  
 She drew an angel down.<sup>1</sup>

FROM 'ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL'

PART OF SHAFTESBURY'S ADDRESS TO MONMOUTH.

Auspicious prince, at whose nativity  
 Some royal planet rul'd the southern sky,  
 Thy longing country's darling and desire,  
 Their cloudy pillar and their guardian fire ;  
 Their second Moses, whose extended wand  
 Divides the seas, and shows the promis'd land ;  
 Whose dawning day in every distant age  
 Has exercis'd the sacred prophet's rage :  
 The people's prayer, the glad diviner's theme,  
 The young men's vision, and the old men's dream !  
 Thee, Saviour, thee, the nation's vows confess,  
 And, never satisfied with seeing, bless :  
 Swift unbespoken pomp thy steps proclaim,  
 And stammering babes are taught to lisp thy name.

JOSEPH ADDISON

1672-1719

'ONE may justly apply to this excellent author,' says Melmoth, 'what Plato, in his allegorical language, says of Aristophanes, that the Graces, having searched all the world for a temple wherein they might for ever dwell, settled at last in the breast of Addison.' This is high and undeniably well-merited praise. Joseph Addison was a thoroughly great man and a great writer, but he was not a great poet in the sense that Milton or Shakespeare or Dante or even Shelley was great. Yet it is just possible that

<sup>1</sup> One of the traditions respecting the power of Cecilia's melody.



if he had written only poetry he might have attained to a higher niche in the temple of fame than that which his diversified talents enabled him to reach. Smooth, polished, and harmonious as are his poetical exercises, yet there is too often something artificial about their treatment and coldness in the effect produced.

In dealing with Addison in a history of poetry, the biographer is thrown upon the horns of a dilemma. There is a strong temptation to look upon him broadly as a man of many parts, whereas it is as a poet only that the mention of him in such a work as this can be excused. Therefore as a poet let us contemplate him.

It is notable, at the outset, that it was by the writing and publication of verses that Addison first drew attention to the literary bent and power of his mind.

Joseph Addison was born on the 1st of May, 1672, at Milston Rectory, near Amesbury, in Wiltshire. His father was the Rev. Launcelot Addison, Rector of Milston, and subsequently Dean of Lichfield. Joseph received the rudiments of education first at Amesbury, under the tuition of the Rev. Mr. Nash, then at Salisbury and Lichfield. From Lichfield he went to the Charterhouse School in London. It was here that he formed a friendship with Sir Richard Steele, who became eventually his coadjutor in carrying on the *Spectator* and *Tatler*. When he was fifteen years of age he matriculated at Queen's College, Oxford, from which, after obtaining a scholarship, he removed to Magdalen College. He graduated M.A. in 1693, but continued to reside in the city of Oxford for ten years. As a student, he was conspicuous for his learning, and was a great favourite amongst his fellow-students, partly, no doubt, on account of his abilities, and also in consequence of the gentleness and modesty of his disposition. It was his intention at this early stage of his career to take Holy Orders, but this ambition was abandoned for reasons which were highly creditable to him.

Addison showed quite as much worldly wisdom as literary skill in the matter of his first poetical efforts. He commenced, in 1694, with an *Address to Dryden*, by which he gained the friendship of the great poet—no slight achievement for a young man just embarking upon the waters of literary life. The lines can boast of but trifling poetical merit, but here and there they give indication that the writer is capable of greater things. Shortly afterwards he translated a part of the *Fourth Georgic*, and Dryden



admitted the work into a book of miscellanies. In 1695 he published some verses in honour of King William. They were not very brilliant, but he sent them to Lord Keeper Somers, who was so pleased with the poem and the compliment that he, in accordance with the poet's wish, laid them before the King himself. As a consequence of this, Addison was endowed with a comfortable pension of £300 a year, which made it possible for him to indulge in his favourite occupation of travelling, and he went abroad for two years, during which time he made a tour in Italy. On the death of King William he lost his pension, and his career as a traveller was cut short. He returned to London, poor but not depressed, and took apartments 'up two pairs of stairs in the Haymarket.' Here he settled down to work in solid earnest, and soon he was wise enough to seize another opportunity. The Battle of Blenheim was fought and won on August 13, 1704. The fame of Marlborough must be fitly celebrated in heroic verse, and Lord Halifax introduced Addison to Treasurer Godolphin as the very man to write it. As a result of the command which followed, Addison produced the ablest of all his poems. This work was entitled *The Campaign*, and so favourable was the impression which it made on the minds of the Ministry that they appointed the poet to the remunerative office of Commissioner of Appeals. The successful poem was greatly admired by even the keenest of critics, and especially by the Minister at whose request it was written. It is addressed to the Duke of Marlborough, and gives a rousing sketch of the military transactions in 1704, dwelling in the most eulogistic strain upon the courage, energy, and military genius of the triumphant general, who is the hero of the piece, and who is compared by the poet to an angel guiding the whirlwind. It was pronounced to be superior not only to Boileau, but to anything which had hitherto appeared in the same style. It was written at a time when literary services were oftentimes rewarded by advancement, and Addison was very soon after this appointed Under-Secretary of State, and a little later Chief Secretary for Ireland.

In 1713 Addison made a 'hit' with the tragedy of *Cato*, which was speedily dramatized, and had a run of thirty-five nights in succession. On this may be said to rest his chief claim to celebrity as a poet. It is supposed to have had its beginning during the undergraduate days of its author at Oxford, and certainly points



to a time of close scholastic study. It promulgated principles which make for liberty and revolutionary methods. The play pleased both Whigs and Tories immensely, and was even translated into French, Italian, and German. It was performed by the Jesuits at their college of St. Omer. But, popular as it was, the critics did not receive it with unqualified praise. Dennis, one of the most eminent of them, attacked it somewhat mercilessly, but it survived all such attacks, and is still accredited by a consensus of public opinion with the possession of many powerful passages. The *Soliloquy on the Immortality of the Soul*, for instance, has been included in almost every collection of greater poems which has been compiled and issued since. Pope lays emphasis on, and seeks in a measure to explain, the fact that both parties were equally charmed with the work. 'He was not so much the wonder of Rome in his days as he is of Britain in ours; and although all the foolish industry possible has been used to make it thought a party play, yet what the author once said of another may most properly be applied to him on this occasion :

" 'Envy itself is dumb, in wonder lost,  
And factions strive who shall applaud him most.' "

The first performance took place at Drury Lane in April, 1713, and the house was filled from floor to ceiling with all the leading wits and statesmen of the day, with no small sprinkling of representatives of the fashionable world. 'We,' says Dr. Collier, 'who live in days when Kean writes himself F.S.A., and every buckle and shoe-tie of the wardrobe, in our better theatres, at least, must pass the scrutiny of men deeply skilled in all the fashions of antiquity, smile at the incongruity of Cato in a flowered dressing-gown and a black wig that cost fifty guineas; and the brocaded Marcia in that famous hoop of Queen Anne's time, which has revived in the crinoline<sup>1</sup> of Victoria's gentle reign. But Cato, thus attired, was not laughed at, for it was the theatrical fashion of the day to dress all characters in wig and hoop, exactly like those worn by the people of quality, who took snuff or flirted the fan in the resplendent box-row. A similar anachronism was committed by the old Norman romancers, who turned every hero—no matter whether he was Abraham or Alexander—into a steel-clad knight of the Middle Ages.' The intrigue dealt with in the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Collier wrote in 1864.



play may be, and has been, accused of want of probability and even of interest; the characters, including Cato himself, have been charged with frigidity, as mere embodiments of rhetorical moralism; but, in spite of these drawbacks, if they exist at all, the play stands forth as a fair example of the singular genius of a man who in this and in other branches of literary creation was one of the most gifted of his age.

Addison had acted for a time as tutor to the son of the Countess Dowager of Warwick. After a long probation of courtship, he married this lady in 1716, but, as was the case with Dryden, this union did not bring him happiness. On the contrary, his domestic discomforts drove him in his later years to seek enjoyment in tavern life, and thus to excesses which had their ill-effect upon his constitution, and tended to shorten his days. There can be no doubt that the haughty disposition and irritable temper of his wife was in a measure to blame for this. The charm and dignity even of Holland House, the historic mansion which amongst its glories numbers the fact that Addison once called it home, were not sufficient to compensate for the lack of that gentle womanly influence which the Countess's companionship failed to bestow.

It was in 1717 that Addison stepped upon the topmost rung of his successful political career. He was made Secretary of State, and brought to the discharge of the duties of that high office all those excellent qualities which had distinguished him in less exalted spheres. But he did not retain this post for long. He retired, on a comfortable pension of £1,500 a year, and resolved to devote the rest of his life to the composition of an exhaustive work on the evidences of Christianity. But this he was not to accomplish, for he died in the year 1719, from a complication of asthma and dropsy, leaving the work unfinished. The work, so far as it went, was published after his death, and was found to possess merits of a very high order, though it has since then been superseded by more elaborate works upon the same subject. A sad feature of this great writer's closing years consisted in the fact that he engaged in a quarrel with his life-long friend, Sir Richard Steele, about some trifling matter which is now buried in oblivion, and was further vexed in spirit by a misunderstanding with Pope. The latter was Pope's fault, he having malignantly accused Addison of unfair conduct respecting his translation of the *Iliad*, and of jealousy concerning the success of *The Rape of the Lock*.



Two interesting stories are told of Addison's deathbed. Pope tells us that he sent the young Earl of Warwick with a message to Gay, the poet, saying he wished to speak to him. Gay came to the bedside, and the dying man craved his forgiveness for a wrong he had done him, for which, he said, he would make reparation if he recovered. He did not explain the nature or extent of the injury in question, but Gay conjectured that it might refer to his having prevented his political advancement in some secret way. At another time he sent for his former pupil, the Earl of Warwick, and warned him against the evils of a dissipated and licentious life. 'I have sent for you,' he said, 'that you may see in what peace a Christian can die.' The end came peacefully at Holland House on the 17th of June, 1719.

Amongst countless eloquent tributes to the memory of this great poet and greater essayist, we quote the following from the *Edinburgh Review* :

'The piety of Addison was in truth of a singularly cheerful character. The feeling which predominates in all his devotional writings is gratitude. God was to him the all-wise and all-powerful Friend, who had watched over his cradle with more than maternal tenderness ; who had listened to his cries before they could form themselves into prayer ; who had preserved his youth from the snares of vice ; who had made his cup run over with worldly blessings ; who had doubled the value of those blessings by bestowing a thankful heart to enjoy them, and dear friends to partake of them ; who had rebuked the waves of the Ligurian Gulf, had purified the autumnal air of the Campagna, and had restrained the avalanches of Mount Cenis.<sup>1</sup> Of the Psalms, his favourite was that which represents the Ruler of all things under the endearing image of a Shepherd, whose crook guides the flock safe through gloomy and desolate glens, to meadows well watered and rich with herbage. On that goodness to which he ascribed all the happiness of his life, he relied in the hour of his death with the love which casteth out fear.'

It must be remembered that Addison's fame as a poet is very far behind that which he attained to, and still maintains, as a writer of fluent and graceful prose. It is no uncommon thing even now to find writers who attribute the simplicity and elegance of their own style to a careful study of the essays of Addison. The

<sup>1</sup> Obvious references to dangers escaped during his travels.



*Spectator* and the *Tatler* will live as long as literature itself. Mr. D'Israeli, in an essay on the genius of the literary character, bears testimony to Addison's influence in a striking passage. He says: 'We read among the Persian fables of Sadi of a swimmer, who, having found a piece of common earth, was astonished at its fragrance, and inquired if it were musk or amber. "No," replied the perfumed mould, "I am nothing but common earth; but roses were planted in my soil, and their odorous virtues have deliciously penetrated through all my pores. I have retained the infusion of sweetness; I had otherwise been but common earth."' Sadi ingeniously applies this to the effect his mishap produces over him. We may also apply it to an essay of Addison, which, like the roses on the common earth, impregnates with intellectual sweetness an uncultivated mind.'

Addison wrote an opera in 1707, which he called *Rosamond*, in which there are sweet and musical songs which are in his happiest poetic vein. But perhaps his hymns may live as long in the sunshine of public esteem as any of his metrical works, for they are refined and beautiful, and delicately tinged throughout with that spirit of manly piety which permeated the writer's soul. We append some verses of one of them :

How are thy servants blest, O Lord !  
How sure is their defence !  
Eternal wisdom is their guide,  
Their help Omnipotence.

In foreign realms and lands remote,  
Supported by Thy care,  
Through burning climes I passed unhurt,  
And breathed the tainted air.

Thy mercy sweetened every toil,  
Made every region please ;  
The hoary Alpine hills it warmed,  
And smoothed the Tyrrhene seas.

\* \* \* \* \*

My life, if Thou preserv'st my life,  
Thy sacrifice shall be ;  
And death, if death must be my doom.  
Shall join my soul to Thee.

#### SOLILOQUY ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

It must be so—Plato, thou reason'st well !—  
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,  
This longing after immortality ?  
Or whence this secret dread and inward horror  
Of falling into nought ? Why shrinks the soul  
Back on herself, and startles at destruction ?



'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us ;  
 'Tis Heaven itself that points out an hereafter,  
 And intimates eternity to man.  
 Eternity ! thou pleasing, dreadful thought !  
 Through what variety of untried being,  
 Through what new scenes and changes must we pass ?  
 The wide, th' unbounded prospect lies before me ;  
 But shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it.  
 Here will I hold. If there's a Power above us—  
 And that there is, all Nature cries aloud  
 Through all her works—he must delight in virtue :  
 And that which he delights in must be happy.  
 But when ? or where ? This world was made for Cæsar.  
 I'm weary of conjectures—this must end them.

*[Laying his hand on his sword]*

Thus am I doubly armed : my death and life,  
 My bane and antidote, are both before me :  
 This<sup>1</sup> in a moment brings me to an end ;  
 But this<sup>2</sup> informs me I shall never die.  
 The soul, secured in her existence, smiles  
 At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.  
 The stars shall fade away, the sun himself  
 Grow dim with age, and Nature sink in years ;  
 But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,  
 Unhurt amidst the wars of elements,  
 The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds.

#### ODE

The spacious firmament on high,  
 With all the blue ethereal sky,  
 And spangled heavens, a shining frame,  
 Their great Original proclaim :  
 Th' unwearied sun, from day to day,  
 Does his Creator's power display,  
 And publishes to every land  
 The work of an Almighty hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,  
 The moon takes up the wondrous tale,  
 And, nightly to the list'ning earth,  
 Repeats the story of her birth ;  
 While all the stars that round her burn,  
 And all the planets in their turn,  
 Confirm the tidings as they roll,  
 And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though, in solemn silence, all  
 Move round the dark terrestrial ball ?  
 What though no real voice nor sound  
 Amid their radiant orbs be found ?  
 In Reason's ear they all rejoice,  
 And utter forth a glorious voice ;  
 For ever singing as they shine  
 ' The hand that made us is divine.

<sup>1</sup> The sword.

<sup>2</sup> Plato's book on the Immortality of the Soul.



## A HISTORY OF BRITISH POETRY

## FROM THE 'LETTER FROM ITALY.'

For wheresoe'er I turn my ravished eyes  
 Gay gilded scenes and shining prospects rise ;  
 Poetic fields encompass me around,  
 And still I seem to tread on classic ground ;  
 For here the muse so oft her harp has strung,  
 That not a mountain rears its head unsung ;  
 Renowned in verse each shady thicket grows,  
 And every stream in heavenly numbers flows.  
 See how the golden groves around me smile,  
 That shun the coast of Britain's stormy isle ;  
 Or when transplanted and preserved with care,  
 Curse the cold clime, and starve in northern air.  
 Here kindly warmth their mountain juice ferments  
 To nobler tastes, and more exalted scents ;  
 Even the rough rocks with tender myrtle bloom,  
 And trodden weeds send out a rich perfume.  
 Bear me, some god, to Baia's gentle seats,  
 Or cover me in Umbria's green retreats ;  
 Where western gales eternally reside,  
 And all the seasons lavish all their pride ;  
 Blossoms, and fruits, and flowers together rise,  
 And the whole year in gay confusion lies.  
 How has kind heaven adorn'd the happy land,  
 And scattered blessings with a wasteful hand !  
 But what avail her unexhausted stores,  
 Her blooming mountains, and her sunny shores,  
 With all the gifts that heaven and earth impart,  
 The smiles of nature and the charms of art,  
 While proud oppression in her valleys reigns,  
 And tyranny usurps her happy plains ?  
 The poor inhabitant beholds in vain  
 The redd'ning orange, and the swelling grain ;  
 Joyless he sees the growing oils and wines,  
 And in the myrtle's fragrant shade repines ;  
 Starves in the midst of nature's bounty curst,  
 And in the loaded vineyard dies for thirst.

O Liberty, thou goddess heavenly bright,  
 Profuse of bliss, and pregnant with delight !  
 Eternal pleasures in thy presence reign,  
 And smiling plenty leads thy wanton train ;  
 Eased of her load, subjection grows more light.  
 And poverty looks cheerful in thy sight ;  
 Thou mak'st the gloomy face of nature gay,  
 Giv'st beauty to the sun, and pleasure to the day.  
 Thee, goddess, thee, Britannia's isle adores ;  
 How has she oft exhausted all her stores,  
 How oft in fields of death thy presence sought,  
 Nor thinks the mighty prize too dearly bought !  
 On foreign mountains may the sun refine  
 The grape's soft juice, and mellow it to wine ;  
 With citron groves adorn a distant soil,  
 And the fat olive swell with floods of oil :  
 We envy not the warmer clime, that lies  
 In ten degrees of more indulgent skies ;  
 Nor at the coarseness of our heaven repine,  
 Though o'er our heads the frozen Pleiads shine :  
 'Tis liberty that crowns Britannia's isle,  
 And makes her barren rocks and her bleak mountains smile.



## EDMUND WALLER

1605-1687

THIS 'courtly and amatory poet' was born at Coleshill, in Hertfordshire, and was a member of an ancient and dignified family. He was educated at Eton and at King's College, Cambridge, and became a Member of Parliament in the same year that he wrote his first poem, at the early age of eighteen years. He is said to have been 'the darling of the House of Commons' on account of the remarkable brilliance of his repartee and the influence and grace of his utterances. He was a veritable 'Vicar of Bray' in politics, being either a Royalist or a Roundhead as occasion suggested. In spite of his graceful diction and attractive manners, he was unsuccessful in a love affair, for the fair Dorothea, daughter of the Earl of Leicester, turned a deaf ear to his compliments, and married the Earl of Sunderland. Under the name of Sacharissa, he had many a time poured forth his full soul to her in verse, and it is said that, meeting her in after-years, the aged lady asked him when he would again write such love-strains to her. The answer was, 'When you are as young, madam, and as handsome as you were then.' In the poetic passage in which he laments her cruelty, he boasts that the reverse in love made him immortal as a poet; he makes this allusion to the fable of Apollo and Daphne:

He caught at love, and filled his arm with bays.

A collection of Waller's poems was published in the year 1664. It passed through many editions in his lifetime, and a second collection was made in 1690, three years after his death.

The poetry of Waller is smooth and cultivated, and suggestive of the man himself. There are many fine lines in it, such as:

Of just Apollo, president of verse.

His lines on a girdle are typical of his amatory style:

That which her slender waist confined  
Shall now my joyful temples bind:  
No monarch but would give his crown  
His arms might do what this hath done.

\* \* \* \* \*

'A narrow compass! and yet there  
Dwelt all that's good, and all that's fair:  
Give me but what this ribbon bound  
Take all the rest the sun goes round.'



'One thing,' says Dr. Craik, 'must be admitted about Waller's poetry: it is free from all mere verbiage and empty sound; if he rarely or never strikes a very powerful note, there is at least always something for the fancy or the understanding, as well as for the ear, in what he writes. He abounds also in ingenious thoughts, which he dresses to the best advantage, and exhibits with great transparency of style. Eminent, however, as he is in his class, he must be reckoned in that subordinate class of poets who think and express themselves chiefly in similitudes, not among those who conceive and write passionately and metaphorically. He has a decorative and illuminating, but not a transforming imagination.'

#### OLD AGE AND DEATH

The seas are quiet when the winds give o'er;  
 So calm are we when passions are no more:  
 For then we know how vain it was to boast  
 Of fleeting things, too certain to be lost.  
 Clouds of affection from our younger eyes  
 Conceal that emptiness which age describes.

The soul's dark cottage, battered and decay'd,  
 Lets in new light through chinks that time has made;  
 Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,  
 As they draw near to their eternal home.  
 Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,  
 That stand upon the threshold of the new.

#### TO A ROSE

Go, lovely Rose!  
 Tell her, that wastes her time and me,  
 That now she knows,  
 When I resemble her to thee,  
 How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,  
 And shuns to have her graces spied,  
 That hadst thou sprung  
 In deserts, where no men abide,  
 Thou must have uncommended died

Small is the worth  
 Of beauty from the light retired:  
 Bid her come forth,  
 Suffer herself to be desired,  
 And not blush so to be admired.

Then die! that she  
 The common fate of all things rare  
 May read in thee:  
 How small a part of time they share  
 That are so wondrous sweet and fair!



## WILLIAM CONGREVE

1670-1729

WILLIAM CONGREVE was a member of an ancient and honourable family. He was born in Yorkshire, but was educated at Kilkenny and at the University of Dublin. At the latter place he acquired an amount of learning which soon raised him 'far above the generality of contemporary writers of *belles-lettres*.' Having left the University, he proceeded to London, nominally for the purpose of studying law at the Middle Temple, but really to become the darling of society. 'He thirsted after fame,' says Mr. Shaw, 'as a man of elegance and a man of letters; but as the literary profession was at that time in a very degraded social position, he was tormented by the difficulty of harmonizing the two incompatible aspirations; and it is related that when Voltaire paid him a visit he affected the character of a mere gentleman, upon which the French wit, with equal acuteness and sense, justly reprov'd his vanity by saying, "If you had been a mere gentleman I would not have come to see you."' A serious affection of the eyes, which resulted in total blindness, cast a gloom over the poet's declining years. He died in London. He left the bulk of his fortune, about £10,000, to the eccentric Duchess of Marlborough, with whom he had formed a close friendship. This lady is said to have spent £7,000 of this sum on a diamond necklace. Remarking upon this incident, the poet Young said afterwards, 'How much better it would have been to have given it to Mrs. Bracegirdle!' an actress with whom the dramatist had been very intimate for years. But the Duchess was not ungrateful, and honoured the poet with a magnificent funeral. The body lay in state in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster, and the pallbearers included the Duke of Bridgewater, the Earl of Wilmington (an ex-Speaker of the House of Commons), Lord Cobham, and other men of rank and distinction. It is further told that Her Grace had a clockwork ivory statue of her late friend placed daily on her table, and a wax doll in which his image was faithfully reproduced. The poet had suffered from the gout, and the wax doll's feet were regularly poulticed by the Duchess's medical attendants.

Congreve's first play was *The Old Bachelor*, produced in 1693.



This was followed by *The Double Dealer*, in 1694, and by *Love for Love*, in 1695. His only tragedy, *The Mourning Bride*, appeared in 1697, and may be said to have greater merit than most of the serious plays of the time. 'It has the stiffness of the French school, with no small affectation of fine writing, without passion, yet it possesses poetical scenes and language.' Congreve was a complete master of the art of dramatic representation, but the licentiousness of his comedies has banished them from the stage.

The following is a portion of a passage which Dr. Johnson considered to be the most poetical paragraph in the whole range of the drama, not excluding Shakespeare from the comparison :

#### DESCRIPTION OF A CATHEDRAL

How reverend is the face of this tall pile,  
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads  
To bear aloft its arched and ponderous roof,  
By its own weight made steadfast and immovable,  
Looking tranquillity. It strikes an awe  
And terror on my aching sight ; the tombs  
And monumental caves of death look cold,  
And shoot a chillness to my trembling heart.  
Give me thy hand and let me hear thy voice ;  
Nay, quickly speak to me, and let me hear  
Thy voice—my own affrights me with its echoes.

The opening lines of *The Mourning Bride* are often quoted, especially the first line :

Music hath charms to soothe a savage breast,  
To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak.  
I've read that things inanimate have moved,  
And, as with living souls, have been informed  
By magic numbers and persuasive sound.

#### SIR JOHN DENHAM

1615-1668

SIR JOHN DENHAM was the son of a Chief Baron of the Exchequer in Ireland. He was born in 1615, and educated at the University of Oxford, and was a supporter of Charles I. In his younger days he was inclined to be wild and dissipated, and lost a great portion of his inheritance at the gaming-table. His royal patron advanced him to the position of Governor of Farnham Castle, and when the King was taken prisoner by the army, Denham acted as



his secretary, being furnished with nine different ciphers for the purpose of carrying on a secret correspondence. Milton tells us that Charles was given to a close study of Shakespeare's plays, but it would seem as if he thought it proper that poetry should be kept apart from matters of State, for he told Denham, on seeing one of his poems, 'that when men are young, and have little else to do, they may vent the overflowings of their fancy in that way; but when they are thought fit for more serious employments, if they still persisted in that course, it looked as if they minded not the way to any better.' Denham took the hint, and refrained from this method of giving vent to the overflowings of his fancy for awhile. The poet accompanied the Duke of York to France in 1648, and took up his abode for some time in that country. During his absence, his estate was confiscated and sold by the Long Parliament. The Restoration, however, saw him placed in full possession of his rights and property once more. The King made him a Knight of the Bath, and appointed him surveyor of the royal residences. In later life Denham forsook his earlier excesses, and took to himself a wife, but the lady does not seem to have contributed in any way to his happiness. In the closing years of his life he became temporarily insane, but on his recovery he wrote a fine poem on the death of Cowley, a composition which is one of his best.

Denham, who is at the most a poet of the secondary order, is now best known as the author of a poem called *Cooper's Hill*, a work which will always be regarded as one of the most striking poems of the century in which it was written. It carries the distinction of being the first example in the history of English poetry of what is called topographical verse. *Cooper's Hill*, the scene which is described in the poem, is very beautifully situated on the Thames, not far from Richmond. But though the merit of the work throughout is of high order, yet it may fairly be said that there are four lines in it which not only surpass anything else in the same poem, but are universally acknowledged to be equal to anything of the kind in any language. In these four lines he embodies a wish that he himself might possess the qualities which he attributes to the noble river of which he writes:

O, could I flow like thee, and make thy stream  
My great example, as it is my theme!  
Though deep, yet clear, though gentle yet not dull,  
Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full.



It is Dr. Johnson who gives Denham the credit of being 'the author of a species of composition that may be denominated local poetry, of which the fundamental subject is some particular landscape, to be poetically described, with the addition of such embellishments as may be supplied by historical retrospection or incidental meditation.'

FROM 'COOPER'S HILL'

My eye, descending from the hill, surveys  
Where Thames among the wanton valleys strays ;  
Thames, the most lov'd of all the ocean's sons  
By his old sire, to his embraces runs,  
Hasting to pay his tribute to the sea,  
Like mortal life to meet eternity.  
Though with those streams he no resemblance hold,  
Whose foam is amber and their gravel gold,  
His genuine and less guilty wealth to explore,  
Search not his bottom, but survey his shore,  
O'er which he kindly spreads his spacious wing,  
And hatches plenty for the ensuing spring,  
And then destroys it with too fond a stay,  
Like mothers which their infants overlay ;  
Nor with a sudden and impetuous wave,  
Like profuse kings, resumes the wealth he gave.

\* \* \* \* \*

Here should my wonder dwell, and here my praise,  
But my fix'd thoughts my wandering eye betrays.  
Viewing a neighbouring hill, whose top of late  
A chapel crown'd, till in the common fate  
Th' adjoining abbey fell. May no such storm  
Fall on our times, where ruin must reform !  
Tell me, my Muse, what monstrous dire offence,  
What crime could any Christian king incense  
To such a rage ? Was't luxury or lust ?  
Was he so temperate, so chaste, so just ?  
Were these their crimes ? They were his own much more ;  
But wealth is crime enough to him that's poor,  
Who having spent the treasures of his crown,  
Condemns their luxury to feed his own.

FROM 'LINES ON ABRAHAM COWLEY'

But cursed be the fatal hour  
That pluck'd the fairest, sweetest flower  
That in the Muses' garden grew,  
And amongst wither'd laurels threw.  
Time, which made them their fame outlive,  
To Cowley scarce did ripeness give.



## MINOR POETS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

## ENGLISH POETS

*John Webster* (whom Hazlitt speaks of as the 'noble-minded') lived and died in the earlier half of the seventeenth century, and was a dramatic poet of considerable power. He is said to have been clerk of St. Andrew's Church, Holborn, though the registers of that parish have been searched in vain for any mention of him. The following striking words by Mr. Shaw convey a forcible description of the style of this poet: 'His terrible and funereal Muse was Death; his wild imagination revelled in images and sentiments which breathe, as it were, the odour of the charnel; his plays are full of pictures recalling with fantastic variety all associations of the weakness and futility of human hopes and interests, and dark questionings of our future destinies. His literary physiognomy has something of that dark, bitter, and woeful expression which makes us thrill in the portraits of Dante.' Webster's dramas include *The Duchess of Malfi*, *The Thracian Wonder*, *The Devil's Law-case*, *Appius and Virginia*, and *The White Devil*. The following lines are from a funeral dirge:

Call for the robin-redbreast and the wren,  
 Since o'er shady groves they hover,  
 And with leaves and flowers do cover  
 The friendless bodies of unburied men.  
 Call unto his funeral dole  
 The ant, the field-mouse, and the mole,  
 To raise him hillocks that shall keep him warm,  
 And, when gay tombs are robbed, sustain no harm;  
 But keep the wolf far hence, that's foe to men,  
 For with his nails he'll dig them up again.

*John Marston*, the dramatic poet, is mentioned in history as one of the chief satirists of the Elizabethan era. He published three books of satires, under the title of *The Scourge of Villainy*, in 1599. Little is known of his history beyond the fact that he had a quarrel with Ben Jonson, who boasted to Drummond that he had beaten Marston and taken his pistol from him. 'If he had sometimes taken his pen,' says Mr. Chambers, 'he would have better served society.' He wrote eight plays.



*John Ford* (1586-1639) was a lawyer who wrote plays merely for pastime. He came of an old Devonshire family. He first wrote for the stage in unison with Dekker and Webster. His works consist of *The Lover's Melancholy*, which appeared in 1628, dedicated to his friends of Gray's Inn, three tragedies entitled respectively *Love's Sacrifice*, *The Brother and Sister*, and *The Broken Heart*, all of which were published in 1633, a drama called *Perkin Warbeck*, and two pieces entitled *Fancies Chaste and Noble* (1638) and *The Lady's Trial* (1639). Charles Lamb ranks Ford in the first order of poets, but in this few (if any) other critics agree with him. Mr. Chambers says: 'A tone of pensive tenderness and pathos, with a peculiarly soft and musical style of blank verse, characterize this poet. The choice of his subjects was unhappy.' Mr. Hartley Coleridge says that 'the choice of horrible stories for his two best plays may have been merely an exercise of intellectual power.' Mr. Shaw remarks that 'if Massinger, among the Elizabethan dramatists, be peculiarly the poet of moral dignity and tenderness, John Ford must be called the great painter of unhappy love.' He began his literary career by writing the last act of *The Witch of Edmonton*, the rest of that work being composed by Dekker and William Rowley.

*Philip Massinger* (1584-1639) was a writer of tragedies and comedies, as well as of 'romantic dramas partaking of both characters.' But little is known of his personal history beyond the facts that he was by birth a gentleman, and four years of his life were spent at the University of Oxford. He is supposed to have been born at Salisbury, his father being in the service of the Earl of Pembroke, evidently holding a responsible office, inasmuch as he was entrusted with letters to Queen Elizabeth. Philip lived in great poverty, and was found dead in his bed 'at his house on the Bankside' one morning in 1639. He was described in the register of the parish in which he was buried as 'Philip Massinger, a stranger.' His chief plays are *The Virgin Martyr* (circa 1620); *The Bondman* (1623); *The Fatal Dowry* (1620); *The City Madam* (1632); and *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (circa 1623). Of thirty-eight dramatic pieces which he is said to have written, either wholly or in part, only eighteen have lived. Eight others were in possession of Mr. Warburton, Somerset Herald, whose servant destroyed them.



*William Browne* (1590-1645), like Phineas and Giles Fletcher, was an admirer and imitator of Spenser. He wrote a goodly number of lyrics and short poems, all of which were composed before he was thirty years of age. Indeed, the best is said to have been written when he was not much more than twenty. He was tutor to the Earl of Carnarvon, and afterwards lived in the household of the Earl of Pembroke. *Britannia's Pastorals*, published in two parts, appeared in 1613 and 1616. It is written in the heroic couplet, and is a graceful and poetical description of country life, with the characteristics of which the poet was very familiar. Warton compares one passage of Browne's to a similar passage in Milton's *L'Allegro*, and the greater poet is supposed to have copied, in *Lycidas*, one of the minor poet's pastorals.

*John Taylor* (circa 1580-1654), known as 'The King's Majesty's Water Poet,' was born in Gloucester, and served for a time in the navy. About the year 1630, having served his apprenticeship to a waterman on the Thames, he set up a public-house, besides plying his trade as a waterman along the coasts. He made a strange journey on foot from London to Edinburgh, accompanied by a servant on horseback, who carried the provisions. He met Ben Jonson at Leith, and that poet magnanimously presented him with a piece of gold 'to drink his health in England.' The singular journey was commemorated by the Water Poet in *The Penniless Pilgrimage*. Taylor was a voluminous writer, his collected works numbering no less than 138 separate pieces in prose and verse. It is said that King James used to say that he knew of no verses equal to 'The Sculler's,' that being another of Taylor's nicknames.

*Thomas Dekker*, who is supposed to have died in 1641, was a minor dramatic poet who wrote more than twenty plays. He was connected with Ben Jonson in writing plays for the Lord Admiral's Theatre. Ben and he fell out, however, with the result that the former has satirized Dekker in his *Poetaster*. To this Dekker replied in a drama entitled *Satiromastix*. His best play is *Fortunatus, or the Wishing Cap*.

*Phineas Fletcher* (1584-1650) and *Giles Fletcher* (circa 1588-1623) were two brothers, 'connected by blood with their great



contemporary the dramatist.' The former was the author of a poem in six cantos entitled *The Purple Island, or the Isle of Man*. Of this work Mr. Hallam says that 'from its nature it is insuperably wearisome, yet his language is often very poetical, his versification harmonious, his invention fertile.' It is nothing more than a detailed description of the mechanism of the human mind and body.

The work of Giles Fletcher is called *Christ's Victory and Triumph*, and is more interesting. Giles, though more vigorous, is also more affected in his style than Phineas, whose verses are more tuneful and harmonious. Both poets bear a certain resemblance to Spenser, of whom they were professed admirers. Campbell, in speaking of Giles, says: 'Inferior as he is to Spenser and Milton, he might be figured, in his happiest moments, as a link of connection in our poetry between these congenial spirits, for he reminds us of both, and evidently gave hints to the latter in a poem on the same subject with *Paradise Regained*.'

#### PHINEAS FLETCHER

##### FROM 'THE PURPLE ISLAND'

Fond man, that looks on earth for happiness,  
And here long seeks what here is never found !  
For all our good we hold from Heaven by lease,  
With many forfeits and conditions bound ;  
Nor can we pay the fine, and rentage due :  
Though now but writ, and sealed, and given anew,  
Yet daily we it break, then daily must renew.

#### GILES FLETCHER

##### FROM 'CHRIST'S VICTORY AND TRIUMPH'

The garden like a lady fair was cut,  
That lay as if she slumbered in delight,  
And to the open sky her eyes did shut ;  
The azure fields of Heaven were 'sembled right  
In a large round, set with the flowers of light :  
The flowers-de-luce, and the round sparks of dew  
That hung upon their azure leaves, did shew  
Like twinkling stars, that sparkle in the evening blue.

*Dr. John Donne*, Dean of St. Paul's (1573-1631), was born in London. He was educated partly at Oxford and partly at Cambridge. At first he was designed for the legal profession, and studied law with that intent, but, though of Roman Catholic parentage, he abandoned the idea, and took Holy Orders in the



Established Church at the age of forty-two. He became so celebrated as a preacher that he is said to have had the offer of fourteen livings during the first year of his ministry. He married a niece of Lord Chancellor Ellesmere. In 1621 he was appointed to the deanery of St. Paul's, and was buried in 1631 in old St. Paul's. His works were collected and published in 1650 by his son. They consist of love verses, satires, epigrams, elegies, religious poems, and complimentary verses. He has been classed by Dr. Johnson amongst the Metaphysical Poets. Mr. Shaw says : ' The versification of Donne is singularly harsh and tuneless, and the contrast between the ruggedness of his expression and the far-fetched ingenuity of his thought adds to the oddity of the effect upon the mind of the reader by making him contrast the unnatural perversion of immense intellectual activity with the rudeness and frequent coarseness both of the ideas and the expression.' But it is now freely admitted that, midst much that may fairly be stigmatized as bad taste, there is a great deal of true poetical merit in his poetry.

Perhaps the best-known verse by this poet is the following, from his *Divine Poems* :

He was the Word, that spake it ;  
He took the bread and brake it ;  
And what that Word did make it,  
I do believe and take it.

Donne is the author of ' one of the earliest poetic allusions to the Copernican system ' :

As new philosophy arrests the sun,  
And bids the passive earth about it run.

In one of his elegies appears the line, so often quoted from :

She and comparisons are odious.

*George Sandys* (1577-1644), described as a ' traveller and poet,' was the youngest son of an Archbishop of York. His chief poetical works were a translation of the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, and metrical translations of the *Psalms*, the *Book of Job*, etc. He composed a *Hymn to my Redeemer* which he hung as an offering on the sepulchre of Christ. It runs thus :

Saviour of mankind—man—Emmanuel,  
Who sinless died for sin, Who vanquished hell,  
The first-fruits of the grave ; Whose life did give  
Light to our darkness ; in Whose death we live, \_



O strengthen Thou my faith ! Correct my will,  
 That mine may Thine obey ! Protect me still,  
 So that the latter death may not devour  
 My soul, sealed with Thy seal !—So in the hour  
 When Thou, Whose body sanctified this tomb,  
 Unjustly judged, a glorious Judge shalt come  
 To judge the world with justice, by that sigh  
 I may be known, and entertained for Thine !

*Sir John Beaumont* (1582-1628), the elder brother of Francis Beaumont, the celebrated dramatist, was the author of a poem on *Bosworth Field*, in the heroic couplet, and other verses. The poem on *Bosworth Field* was published by the author's son in 1629. His versification is 'correct and forcible,' though 'generally cold and unimpassioned.'

*Sir Henry Wotton* (1568-1639) was Secretary to the Earl of Essex, and was more distinguished as a politician and diplomatist than as a poet. He became Provost of Eton, and took deacon's Orders. His poems, upon which his literary fame chiefly rests, are 'marked by a fine vein of feeling and happy expression.' The following lines are from the poem on *The Character of a Happy Life* :

How happy is he born and taught  
 That serveth not another's will ;  
 Whose armour is his honest thought,  
 And simple truth his utmost skill !

*William Chamberlayne* (1619-1689) was a member of the medical profession who lived at Shaftesbury. He was the author of an heroic poem in five books entitled *Pharonnida*, and a tragic-comedy called *Love's Victory*, which was produced after the Restoration under the new name of *Wits led by the Nose, or the Poet's Revenge*. Some of his work is excellent, but at times he drifts into the merely trivial and commonplace. Speaking of virgin purity, he says :

The morning pearls,  
 Dropt in the lily's spotless bosom, are  
 Less chastely cool, ere the meridian sun  
 Hath kissed them into heat.

*Charles Cotton* (1630-1687) was a son of Sir George Cotton, and a friend of Izaak Walton. On the death of his father he inherited an estate at Ashbourne, in Derbyshire, which, however, was much encumbered. As a means of increasing his income he resorted to literary work. He became a Captain in the army



at the age of forty, and married, as his second wife, the Countess-Dowager of Ardglass. This lady had a dowry of £1,500 a year, but it was outside the reach of the poet's mismanagement, and he died insolvent in 1687. As a poet he has been classed with Andrew Marvell. He was the author of several humorous poems, and Campbell has said that his *Voyage to Ireland* seems to anticipate the manner of Anstey in the *Bath Guide*.

*John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester* (1647-1680), lived a dissipated life, and died of physical exhaustion at the early age of thirty-three. His poems were not, as a rule, distinguished for any particular grace of diction. One line of his is often quoted as giving a true description of King Charles II., whom he describes as

A merry monarch, scandalous and poor.

*Sir Charles Sedley* (1639-1701) was a better man than Rochester, and quite his equal as a poet. He is described as 'one of the brightest satellites of the Court of Charles II.' The King is said to have asked him 'if he had not obtained a patent from Nature to be Apollo's viceroy.' The poems and plays of Sedley were extravagantly praised by the critics of the day, but they were not without conspicuous merit. He lived to a good old age, and the words which he has applied to one of his own heroines may be quoted as applying to himself, for, though in early life he was somewhat dissipated, he

Bloomed in the winter of his days  
Like Glastonbury thorn.

*Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle*, was the daughter of Sir Charles Lucas, and a Maid of Honour to Queen Henrietta Maria. She published a volume of verse entitled *Poems and Fancies*. She was born in 1624. 'It pleased God,' she wrote, 'to command His servant Nature to indue me with a poetical and philosophical genius even from my very birth.' The most popular of the Duchess's poems is called *The Pastime and Recreation of the Queen of Fairies in Fairy Land*. In her poem on *Mirth and Melancholy*, speaking of the latter, she says :

In hollow caves, thatched houses, and low cells,  
She loves to live, and there alone she dwells.

*Mrs. Katherine Philips* (1631-1664), a poetess known as 'Orinda,' was the wife of James Philips of the Priory, Cardigan. She was a very popular writer of verse in her day.



*John Philips* (1676-1708) was the author of a parody on the style of Milton, entitled *The Splendid Shilling*, 'a splendid *jeu d'esprit*.' He also wrote a poem on the *Battle of Blenheim*, and 'a half-didactic, half-descriptive poem on the manufacture of Cider, in imitation of the *Georgics* of Virgil. He was an admirer and professed imitator of Milton. 'The notion,' says Mr. Chambers, 'that Philips was able, by whatever he might write, to blast the fame of Milton, is one of those preposterous conceits which even able men will sometimes entertain.'

*The Rev. John Pomfret* (1667-1703) was a clergyman, who became Rector of Malden in Bedfordshire. He wrote a number of poems and some *Pindaric Essays*, but is now chiefly remembered for his poem entitled *The Choice*, of which Dr. Johnson has remarked that no composition in our language has been oftener perused. Southey asks why this poem is the most popular in the English language, and Campbell replies that 'it might have been demanded with equal propriety why London Bridge is built of Parian marble.' The inference is that *The Choice* is *not* the most popular poem in the English language. But it is a beautiful poem nevertheless. It is somewhat suggestive of Goldsmith, but does not reach so high a level as *The Deserted Village*. The following lines will give a good idea of the style of the poem :

Near some fair town I'd have a private seat,  
Built uniform, not little, nor too great ;  
Better, if on a rising ground it stood ;  
On this side fields, on that a neighbouring wood

\* \* \* \* \*

A little garden, grateful to the eye,  
And a cool rivulet run murmuring by,  
On whose delicious banks a stately row  
Of shady limes or sycamores should grow.  
At the end of which a silent study placed,  
Should be with all the noblest authors graced.  
Horace and Virgil, in whose mighty lines  
Immortal wit and solid learning shines ;  
Sharp Juvenal, and amorous Ovid too,  
Who all the turns of love's soft passion knew.

*Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset* (1637-1706), was 'a perfect specimen of the aristocratic literary dilettante' of his day. His best poem is a well-known song entitled *To all you Ladies now on Land*, which was written by him at sea when in the first Dutch War he was a volunteer under the Duke of York. It



is addressed to the ladies of Whitehall, and 'breathes the gay and gallant spirit that animates the *chanson militaire* in which the French so much excel.'

*John Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire* (1649-1721), is chiefly remembered, as a poet, for his *Essay on Poetry*, written in the heroic couplet. He was associated in his later years with the wits and poets of the reign of Queen Anne, but he belongs more to the preceding age. The *Essay on Poetry* was issued anonymously in 1682. The second and enlarged edition appeared in 1691, and was praised by Pope and Dryden. Pope, indeed, is said to have had a hand in its improvement, and it seems to have suggested the greater poet's *Essay on Criticism*. We quote six lines of Buckingham's Essay :

Of all those arts in which the wise excel,  
Nature's chief masterpiece is writing well ;  
No writing lifts exalted man so high  
As sacred and soul-moving Poesy :  
No kind of work requires so nice a touch,  
And, if well-finished, nothing shines so much.

*Bishop Thomas Ken* (1637-1711) was educated at Winchester College and New College, Oxford. He was preferred in 1667 to the Vicarage of Brightstone, Isle of Wight. He wrote a number of poems, devotional and didactic, but is chiefly remembered for his hymns. It is said that he used to sing his *Morning and Evening Hymns* daily, accompanying himself upon the lute. His hymn commencing *Awake, my soul, and with the sun* is perhaps the most popular of his poems. In 1684 he was made Bishop of Bath and Wells, and was one of the seven Bishops sent to the Tower of London for refusing to sign the Declaration of Indulgence issued by James II. He was deprived, but had saved £700, for which sum Lord Weymouth allowed him £80 a year and a residence at Longleat, where he died.

*Edward Fairfax* (flourished in 1600) was a gentleman of fortune who became distinguished as a translator of Tasso's *Jerusalem*. He dedicated his work to Queen Elizabeth. The first edition is dated 1600, and the second 1624. 'The poetical beauty and freedom of Fairfax's version have been the theme of almost universal praise. Dryden ranked him with Spenser as a master of our language, and Waller said he derived from him the harmony of his numbers.' Mr. Hallam says that 'it has been considered



as one of the earliest works in which the obsolete English which had not been laid aside in the days of Sackville, and which Spenser affected to preserve, gave way to a style not much differing, at least in point of single words and phrases, from that of the present day.' Fairfax also wrote a number of eclogues, one of which was published in Cooper's *Muses' Library* in 1741, but it has been stigmatized as 'puerile and absurd.' Fairfax is supposed to have died in 1631, though the exact time of his death, like that of his birth, cannot be stated with certainty.

*Sir Richard Fanshawe* (1607-1666) was a brother of Lord Fanshawe, and secretary to Prince Rupert. He was the author of translations of the *Lusiad* of Camoens, and the *Pastor Fido* of Guarini, as well as some minor poems. In 1643 he composed a song entitled *The Saint's Encouragement*, which is 'full of clever satire.' He was sent as Ambassador to the Court of Madrid by King Charles II. in 1665, a year before his death. He married a daughter of Sir John Harrison. Lady Fanshawe was the author of *Memoirs* of her own life, to which she added extracts from Sir Richard's correspondence.

*William Walsh* (1663-1708) was a contemporary of Dryden, who was popular as a minor poet and critic in his day. He was a friend of Alexander Pope, and helped him in his studies. His poetry, however, is now forgotten.

*Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax* (1661-1715), was a great courtier and a patron of poetry. He wrote verses on the death of Charles II., and joined with Prior in the composition of *The City Mouse and the Country Mouse*, a burlesque on Dryden's *Hind and Panther*. Addison's best poem, *A Letter from Italy*, is dedicated to him.

*Bishop Henry King* (1592-1669) was a writer of poems who held the position of Chaplain to King James I. He published his poems, elegies, etc., in the year 1657. His poems are chiefly of a religious tendency, and are smooth and easy-flowing. He became Bishop of Chichester in 1641.

*Lady Elizabeth Carew* (flourished in 1613) is supposed to have written the tragedy entitled *Mariam, the Fair Queen of Jewry*, which appeared in the reign of King James I.



*Dr. Thomas Sprat*, Bishop of Rochester (1636-1713), was an author of considerable repute. Dr. Johnson speaks of him as 'an author whose pregnancy of imagination and eloquence of language have deservedly set him high in the ranks of literature.' But this praise is only due to his prose writings. His poetical works are not worthy of his general reputation. They consist of a *Pindaric Ode on the Plague of Athens*, and a *Poem on the Death of the Protector*.

*The Rev. William Cartwright* (1611-1643) was the son of an innkeeper at Cirencester, who had run through his patrimony. He was educated at Oxford, and took Holy Orders in 1638. He died, at the early age of thirty-two, of a fever called camp-disease. His poetical works were admired by Ben Jonson and other contemporary poets, and were published in 1651. The King, who was at Oxford at the time, went into mourning for Cartwright's death.

*Thomas Randolph* (1605-1634) was the author of a number of miscellaneous poems as well as of five dramatic pieces. He was born at Newnham, and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. Like Cartwright, he was a friend of Ben Jonson.

*The Rev. Dr. William Strode* (circa 1598-1644) was born near Plympton, in Devonshire. He was educated at Christ Church, Oxford, and took Holy Orders in 1621. He was made a Canon of Christ Church in 1638.

*Thomas Stanley* (1625-1678) was the only son of Sir Thomas Stanley, Knight. He published a volume of verse in 1651.

*Sir Samuel Garth* (1670-1719) was an eminent member of the medical profession. He was descended from an old family in Yorkshire. He was educated at Peterhouse College, Cambridge, where he remained, it is said, until he 'was created Doctor of Physic, July 7, 1691.' He died after a short illness in 1719, and was buried in the church of Harrow-on-the-Hill. In a biographical sketch prefixed to an edition of his works published at Edinburgh in 1779, we read that 'upon the death of Dryden, in May, 1701, by a very strange accident his burial came to depend on the piety of Dr. Garth, who caused the body to be brought to



the College of Physicians, proposed, and encouraged by his gentle example, a subscription for defraying the expense of the funeral; and, after pronouncing over the corpse a suitable oration, he attended the solemnity to Westminster Abbey, where at last the remains of that great man were interred in Chaucer's grave.' Garth's chief poem is *The Dispensary*, a mock-heroic poem in six cantos, published in 1699 'to aid the College of Physicians in a war they were waging with the apothecaries.' The apothecaries had ventured to prescribe as well as compound medicines. Garth was also the author of a number of shorter poems, including *Epistles*, *Prologues*, etc. In politics he was a Whig.

*Sir Richard Blackmore* (circa 1658-1729) was also a physician in good practice, and noted for the elegance of his poems. Dr. Johnson says of him that 'by the unremitted enmity of the wits, whom he provoked more by his virtue than his dulness,' he has been 'exposed to worse treatment than he deserved.' He was knighted by King William III. His chief poem, *The Creation*, is designed 'to demonstrate the existence of a Divine Eternal Mind.' In the opinion of Johnson it 'wants neither harmony of numbers, accuracy of thought, nor elegance of diction.'

*George Granville, Lord Lansdowne* (circa 1665-1735), was a poet, though not of eminence. Pope speaks of him as 'Granville the Polite.' His poems in praise of *Mira*—the Countess of Newburgh—are the best known of his works. He was in favour with Queen Anne, but was committed to the Tower by George I. on a charge of disloyalty.

*Anne, Countess of Winchelsea* (circa 1660-1720), was the author of a graceful poem entitled *The Nocturnal Reverie*. She was the daughter of Sir William Kingsmill, of Southampton. Wordsworth refers to it in the following complimentary terms: 'It is remarkable that, excepting *The Nocturnal Reverie*, and a passage or two in the *Windsor Forest* of Pope, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of *Paradise Lost* and *The Seasons* does not contain a single new image of external nature.' The following lines are from a shorter poem by the Countess, entitled *Life's Progress*:



How gaily is at first begun  
 Our life's uncertain race !  
 Whilst yet that sprightly morning sun,  
 With which we just set out to run,  
 Enlightens all the place.

\* \* \* \*

How soft the first ideas prove  
 Which wander through our minds !  
 How full the joys, how free the love,  
 Which does that early season move,  
 As flowers the western winds !

*Richard Corbet*, Bishop of Oxford (1582-1635), was educated at Westminster and at the University of Oxford. He became a favourite of King James I., partly on account of his social qualities and partly because of his opposition to the Puritans. Through the royal influence he was appointed to the bishopric of Oxford, and was afterwards translated to the See of Norwich. The Bishop's poems were first published in 1647, twelve years after his death. They are of a miscellaneous character, and include *A Journey into France* and *Farewell to the Fairies*. Of these two, the best known of his writings, the latter is the more poetical, but all his verses are lively and witty. Though his conduct was sometimes rather undignified for a bishop, yet 'his toleration, solid sense, and lively talents procured him deserved esteem and respect.'

*William Habington* (1605-1654) was educated at the Roman Catholic college of St. Omer, but did not become a Jesuit. His father and uncle were both mixed up with Babington's conspiracy. His mother is said to have written the letter to Lord Monteagle which had the effect of averting the Gunpowder Plot. Habington married Lucia, daughter of the first Lord Powis, and to this lady he gave the poetic name of Castara, which name also furnished the title of his collected poems, published in 1634. The poems include *The Mistress*, *The Wife*, and *The Holy Man*. There is nothing very attractive about his verse, which is often affected, though occasionally smooth and graceful. His poems are frequently of a religious tendency. He wrote one play, *The Queen of Arragon*, a tragi-comedy, in 1640.

*Thomas Carew* (1589-1639) was 'one of the ornaments of the Court of Charles I.,' where he held the offices of Gentleman of the Privy Chamber and Sewer-in-Ordinary to the King. His



poetical works were very popular at the time in which they were written, but they are now forgotten, except by the careful student of antiquities. Campbell speaks very highly of his genius, remarking that 'among the poets who have walked in the same limited path he is pre-eminently beautiful, and deservedly ranks among the earliest of those who gave a cultivated grace to our lyrical strains.' Descended from an ancient family, he was educated at Oxford, and subsequently travelled on the Continent. His poems are short, as a rule, the longest being a mask called *Cælum Britannicum*. This was written by command of the King, and is partly written in prose, the lyrical pieces being set to music by Dr. Henry Lawes.

*Jasper Mayne, D.D.* (1604-1672), was a dramatic poet who wrote two comedies illustrating the manners and customs which prevailed in London during the reign of Charles I. He was a clergyman, and eventually became Archdeacon of Chichester and Chaplain to King Charles II. His comedies are entitled *The City Match* and *The Amorous War*. He also wrote some fugitive verse and a translation of Lusian's *Dialogues*. He was a native of Hatherleigh in Devonshire, and was educated at Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford, where he took the degree of D.D.

*Thomas Otway* (1651-1685) was born at Trotting, in Sussex, on the 3rd of March, 1651. His father was a clergyman, and the future poet was educated at Winchester School, whence he proceeded to Oxford, but he left the University without taking his degree. He went on the stage in London in 1672, but was unsuccessful as an actor. He then took to the production of dramatic pieces, and his latent talent began to show itself more fully. He became a cornet of Dragoons in 1677, and went to Flanders with his regiment, but he was soon dismissed the service for misdemeanour. He then returned to his former avocation as a playwright, with a fair amount of success, though he continued always poor, dying at length in penury at the early age of thirty-four. His fame rests chiefly on his two tragedies, *The Orphan* and *Venice Preserved*. He also produced *Caius Marcius* (1680) and *The Soldier's Fortune* (1681). Otway has been highly, even extravagantly, praised by excellent critics, and his work is certainly of a very high order of merit. Sir Walter Scott



says his talents in scenes of affection rival and sometimes even excel those of Shakespeare, and he has been compared to Dryden as regards propriety of style and character to the disadvantage of the greater poet. We quote some lines from *Venice Preserved* :

*Belvidera.* My lord, my love, my refuge !  
Happy my eyes when they behold thy face !  
My heavy heart will leave its doleful beating  
At sight of thee, and bound with sprightly joys.  
Oh, smile as when our loves were in the spring,  
And cheer my fainting soul !

*Jaffier.* As when our loves  
Were in the spring ! Has, then, my fortune changed thee ?  
Art thou not, Belvidera, still the same,  
Kind, good, and tender, as my arms first found thee ?  
If thou art altered, where shall I have harbour ?  
Where ease my loaded heart ? Oh ! where complain ?

*Belvidera.* Does this appear like change, or love decaying,  
When thus I throw myself into thy bosom,  
With all the resolution of strong truth ?

*Nathaniel Lee* (1655-1692) was 'a tragic poet who not only had the honour of assisting Dryden in the composition of several of his pieces, but who, in spite of adverse circumstances, and in particular of several attacks of insanity, one of which necessitated his confinement during four years in Bedlam, possessed and deserved a high reputation for genius.' He was the son of a clergyman, and was educated at Westminster School and at Cambridge. He was an actor for some time, but abandoned that profession and became a playwright. As was the case with Otway, dramatic authorship was more congenial to him, and better calculated to bring out the best of his powers. The pieces in which he assisted Dryden were *Ædipus* and *The Duke of Guise*. His own works were eleven in number, all tragedies. The best of these are *The Rival Queens* ; or, *Alexander the Great*, *Mithridates*, *Theodosius*, and a pathetic drama called *Lucius Junius Brutus*. His style is, as might be expected, sometimes extravagant and even frenzied, but there is no lack of beautiful imagery in his verse, such as this :

Speech is morning to the mind ;  
It spreads the beauteous images abroad,  
Which else lie furled and clouded in the soul.

*Thomas Shadwell* (1640-1692) is chiefly remembered as the Mac-Flecknoe of Dryden's celebrated satire, and the Og of *Absalom and Achitophel*. He became Poet-Laureate 'when the Revolution threw Dryden and other excessive loyalists into the



shade.' Besides seventeen plays, he wrote several other pieces of poetry, some of which have been commended.

*Nicholas Rowe* (circa 1673-1718) was a dramatic poet of considerable power. His first tragedy, *The Ambitious Stepmother*, was produced with much success in 1700. He afterwards wrote *The Fair Penitent*, *Ulysses*, *The Royal Convert*, *Jane Shore*, and *Lady Jane Grey*. His dramatic productions amount to eight in all. He also published some miscellaneous poems which do not reach a very high level. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, and his widow erected a handsome monument over his grave. He was made poet laureate on the accession of George I.

*George Wither* (1588-1677) was a poet whose writings display so many excellent qualities that they have been spoken of by critics as affording the reader a 'perpetual feast.' He was born in Hampshire, and educated at Magdalen College, Oxford. His first essay in authorship was entitled *Abuses Whipt and Stript*, and appeared in 1613. It was a satire of the abuses which led to the Civil War, and Wither was sent to the Marshalsea prison. During his incarceration he wrote his most important work, a collection of poems, in the main of a pastoral character, and entitled *The Shepherd's Hunting*. In the Civil War Wither took the popular side, sold his patrimony in order to raise a troop of horse for the Parliament, rose to the rank of a Major, and in 1642 was appointed Governor of Farnham Castle. He eventually became a Major-General under Cromwell, but at the Restoration he was deprived of all his possessions and again thrown into prison. During this second period of confinement he wrote a number of satires and poems. He was released in 1663, and died four years afterwards. In 1622 he published a collection of his poems under the title *Mistress of Philarette*. In 1635 he published one of his most popular works, called *Emblems, Ancient and Modern, quickened with Metrical Illustrations*. Much of Wither's poetry is beautiful, but at times he shows a lamentable lack of good taste. 'The vice of Wither,' says Mr. Shaw, 'as it was generally of the literature of his age, was a passion for ingenious turns and unexpected conceits, which bear the same relation to really beautiful thought that plays upon words do to true wit.'



*Sir William Davenant* (1606-1668) was the author of a heroic poem called *Gondibert* and of some miscellaneous verses. He was remarkable in his day as a dramatic writer of great power. His poems, however, are now almost forgotten. *Gondibert* is a monotonous work which is written in 'a peculiar four-lined stanza with alternate rhymes, afterwards employed by Dryden in his *Annus Mirabilis*.' Critics have varied strangely in their estimate of its merits. It is redeemed from absolute oblivion by its preface, which is still looked upon as 'highly creditable to him for judgment, taste, and feeling.'

*Sir John Suckling* (1609-1641) was an excellent specimen of the Cavalier poet. His career was most romantic and adventurous. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and on the death of his father in 1627, he 'set off upon his travels.' He fought in many battles under the King of Sweden, and returned to be a brilliant luminary of the Court of Charles I. He was accounted the best bowler and card-player in England. Joining in a scheme to enable Strafford to escape from the Tower, he was detected, and fled to France, where he died. Suckling was an admirable writer of 'occasional verses.' His works consist of four plays, and a number of short miscellaneous poems. He is chiefly remembered now, perhaps, for his *Ballad on a Wedding*, which is a lively and graceful example of his best style. Of one well-known verse in this poem, Mr. Chambers remarks that it has never been excelled. The verse is as follows :

Her feet, beneath her petticoat,  
Like little mice, stole in and out,  
As if they feared the light :  
But oh ! she dances such a way !  
No sun upon an Easter-day  
Is half so fine a sight.

*Richard Lovelace* (1618-1658) affords another example of a Cavalier poet. The son of Sir William Lovelace, he was educated at Oxford. He was remarkable for personal beauty as well as for his literary attainments. He was cast into prison by the Long Parliament for delivering a petition praying for the restoration of the King. Released on heavy bail, he served for awhile with the French army, and was wounded. On his return in 1648, he was re-incarcerated. In prison he wrote a number of poems which he published in 1649 under the title of *Lucasta : Odes, Sonnets, Songs, etc.* He was disappointed in a love affair, and died



in extreme poverty. Lovelace's poetry is not of a very high order, though sometimes it rises above the level of the commonplace.

*Richard Crashaw* (circa 1613-1649) was the son of a clergyman attached to the Temple Church, London. He was educated at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, being elected a scholar of that foundation in 1632. He subsequently became a Fellow of Peterhouse in 1637. In the Puritan troubles he was dismissed from his fellowship, went to France, and embraced the Roman Catholic faith. He was promoted to be a Canon of Loretto and secretary to a Cardinal, and held these preferments until his death. Crashaw's poetry is very melodious and rich in imagery. He was essentially a religious poet. He published, while at Cambridge, a number of Latin poems, one of which contains the beautiful line on the miracle of turning the water into wine :

Lympha pudica Deum vidit et erubuit,

which is translated :

The modest water saw its God and blushed.

He published in 1646 a volume of poems in English entitled *Steps to the Temple*, which is of a deep moral tone. *Music's Duel* is a poem borrowed from the *Contention between a Nightingale and a Musician*, by Famianus Strada. The following, from his *Lines on a Prayer-Book sent to Mrs. R.*, will give some idea of the piety of the poet's muse :

Only be sure  
The hands be pure  
That hold these weapons, and the eyes  
Those of turtles, chaste and true,  
Wakeful and wise,  
Here is a friend that shall fight for you.  
Hold but this book before your heart,  
Let Prayer alone to play his part.  
But oh ! the heart  
That studies this high art  
Must be a sure housekeeper,  
And yet no sleeper.

It has often been regretted that his life was not a longer and happier one, realizing his own ideal of

A happy soul, that all the way  
To Heaven hath a Summer's day.

*John Cleveland* (1613-1658) was the son of a clergyman who was Rector of a parish in Leicestershire. He was educated at



Cambridge, and joined the King's army during the Civil War. He was distinguished as 'the loudest and most strenuous poet of the royal cause,' and wrote a scathing satire on the Scots in the year 1647. He was imprisoned in 1655, but was set free by the Protector, and died three years after his release. His poetry is far-fetched and extravagant in conception, but there are some fine passages to be found in it. He wrote an *Elegy on the Archbishop of Canterbury*, from which we quote these lines as typical of his best style :

How could success such villainies applaud ?  
 The State in Strafford fell, the Church in Laud.  
 The twins of public rage adjudged to die  
 For treasons they should act by prophecy.  
 The facts were done before the laws were made,  
 The trump turned up after the game was played.  
 Be dull, great spirits, and forbear to climb,  
 For worth is sin, and eminence a crime.  
 No churchman can be innocent and high ;  
 'Tis height makes Grantham steeple stand awry.

It has been said that Butler was indebted to Cleveland for some passages in *Hudibras*. This poet's love-verses are amongst the most poetical of his compositions.

*John Chalkhill* (1599-1679) was the author of a pastoral romance which was published in 1683 by Izaak Walton, and bearing the title *Thealma and Clearchus*. It is written in the heroic couplet. The scene is laid in Arcadia, and the poem contains a description of the Golden Age, which was succeeded by the Age of Iron. Our dates are taken from the tomb of Chalkhill in Winchester Cathedral, though Walton calls him 'an acquaintant and friend of Edmund Spenser,' who died in 1599, and speaks of him as being dead in 1678. From these circumstances it has been thought by some that Walton wrote the poem himself, and by others that, being ninety years old at the time, his memory was defective.

*Andrew Marvell* (1621-1678), though chiefly celebrated as a politician and prose writer, is worthy of honourable mention as a poet. He was the son of the Rector of Winestead, a parish in Lincolnshire. He was educated at Cambridge. In the earlier part of his life he was in the diplomatic service, and was attached for awhile to the British Embassy at Constantinople. In 1657, through the influence of Milton, he was appointed to help the great



poet in the office of Latin Secretary. His chief poems consist of a piece entitled *The Lamentation of a Nymph on the Death of her Fawn*, a *Song of the Emigrants in Bermuda*, and *Thoughts in a Garden*. It is thought that some lines of Marvell's song on *The Emigrants* were in the mind of Thomas Moore when he wrote his *Canadian Boat Song*. Marvell's lines are these :

Thus sang they in the English boat  
A holy and a cheerful note,  
And all the way, to guide their chime,  
With falling oars they kept the time.

*Henry Vaughan* (1621-1695) was born in Wales, a circumstance which, it appears, led him to describe himself as a Silurist. Campbell says of him that 'he is one of the harshest even of the inferior order of the school of conceit ; but he has some scattered thoughts that meet our eye amid his harsh pages, like wild-flowers on a barren heath.' This is looked upon by other critics as a harsh and somewhat unjust verdict, and, indeed, it does not convey an adequate idea of the quality of the poet's verse. A volume of poems of his composition was published by a friend in 1651, under the title *Olor Iscanus*. His *Sacred Poems*, published in his later years, are decidedly his best. His metre and rhythm are constantly at fault, even in his best productions.

*Sir Edward Sherburne* (1618-1702) was born in London. He was a Roman Catholic, and firmly attached to the fortunes of Charles I., who made him Commissary-General of the Artillery, in which capacity he witnessed the Battle of Edge Hill. He afterwards attended Charles to Oxford, where he received the degree of M.A. He was knighted in 1682. His works consist of *Poems and Translations* (1651), a *Translation of Seneca's Tragedies*, and *The Sphere of Manilius*. His writings are marked by considerable genius, and his sacred poems are often elegant.

*Edmund Smith (Neale)* (circa 1668-1710) was a wit, scholar, critic, and poet. His real name was Neale, but he lost his father in infancy, and was adopted by a brother-in-law of his father, named Smith. By the latter gentleman he was brought up, and placed at Westminster School under Dr. Busby, who considered him one of his best scholars. He assumed the name of his benefactor, and under that name was elected to a studentship at Christ Church, Oxford. He was the author of a tragedy



entitled *Phædra and Hippolytus*, an excellent translation of *Longinus on the Sublime*, and some very creditable poems. His biographer, Oldisworth, tells us that he commenced a spirited translation of the works of Pindar, which it is to be regretted he did not live to complete. His carelessness in dress procured him the nickname of 'Captain Ragg.' Habits of intemperance and great personal imprudence reduced him to penury. He died at Hartham, Wiltshire, in 1710.

*George Stepney* (1663-1707) was descended from an ancient family settled in Prendergast, in Pembrokeshire. He was born in Westminster, and was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. There he acquired the friendship of the Earl of Halifax, who afterwards procured him some important diplomatic appointments. Queen Anne sent him on an embassy to Holland in 1706. He died soon after his return in the following year, and lies buried in Westminster Abbey, with a somewhat pompous inscription over his remains. His poems, which seldom, if ever, rise above mediocrity, consist of a translation of the eighth *Satire of Juvenal*, *Imitations of Horace*, *The Austrian Eagle*, *On Dreams*, etc.

*The Rev. Richard Duke* (died in 1710) is mentioned by Dr. Johnson. His *Poems on Several Occasions* were published, in conjunction with those of Roscommon, in 1717. They were not very distinguished.

### SCOTTISH POETS

*Sir Robert Ayton* (1570-1638) was a Gentleman of the Bed-chamber to King James I. and Private Secretary to the Queen. He was also an intimate friend of Ben Jonson. He was a son of Ayton of Kinaldie, and was born in Fifeshire. His poems are written in pure and graceful English. The following lines, *On Woman's Inconstancy*, give a good idea of his style :

I loved thee once, I'll love no more ;  
 Thine be the grief as is the blame ;  
 Thou art not as thou wast before,  
 What reason I should be the same ?  
 He that can love unloved again  
 Hath better store of love than brain :  
 God send me love my debts to pay,  
 While unthrifths fool their love away.



*The Earl of Ancrum* (1578-1654) was a younger son of Sir Andrew Ker of Ferniehurst, and a friend of King James and of King Charles I. He wrote some sonnets which have been highly praised.

*The Earl of Stirling* (1580-1640) was the author of a number of poems which gained considerable favour. A complete edition of his works was published in 1637, entitled *Recreations with the Muses*. It contains four tragedies, one on the subject of *Julius Cæsar*, together with a sacred poem on *The Day of Judgment*, in twelve parts, a poem entitled *Jonathan*, and another addressed to Prince Henry, a son of King James. He addressed a pleasing sonnet to *Aurora*, a lady whom he had 'loved and lost.' The Earl was Secretary of State for Scotland from 1626 to 1641, during which period King Charles tried to establish episcopacy in the North. Campbell thinks there is 'elegance of expression' in some of Stirling's shorter poems.

*William Drummond of Hawthornden* (1585-1649), a friend of Ben Jonson and of Drayton, was the most distinguished of the Scottish poets of this century. He was a son of Sir John Drummond, a Gentleman-Usher to King James. He published in 1613 *Tears on the Death of Mæliades*, by whom is meant Henry, Prince of Wales. In 1616 there appeared a volume of *Poems*, containing miscellaneous verses of very considerable merit. His best poem was issued in 1617. It is called *Forth Feasting, a Panegyric to the King's Most Excellent Majesty*, being lines of congratulation to King James on his return to his native country. Drummond's *Sonnets* are excellent, and are described by Hallam as 'polished and elegant, free from conceit and bad taste, in pure, unblemished English.' The following is an example of his best style :

I know that all beneath the moon decays,  
 And what by mortals in this world is brought  
 In Time's great periods, shall return to nought ;  
 The fairest states have fatal nights and days.  
 I know that all the Muse's heavenly lays  
 With toil of sprite which are so dearly bought,  
 As idle sounds, of few or none are sought,  
 That there is nothing lighter than vain praise.  
 I know frail beauty's like the purple flower,  
 To which one morn oft birth and death affords,  
 That love a jarring is of mind's accords,  
 Where sense and will bring under reason's power :  
 Know what I list, all this cannot me move,  
 But that, alas ! I both must write and love.



*James Graham, Marquis of Montrose* (1612-1650), wrote some verses 'irregular in style, but occasionally happy and vigorous in expression, and characteristic of that daring, romantic spirit he displayed both as Covenanter and as Cavalier.' His poem written after sentence of death had been passed upon him is particularly weird and gruesome.

*Robert Sempill* (1595-1659) was a Royalist who fought on the side of Charles I. He came of a poetical family, and wrote some poems, including *The Piper of Kilbarchan*, the style of which was copied by Burns and Ramsay.

*William Cleland* (circa 1661-1689) was the author of a poem called *Hallo, my Fancy*, and 'a Hudibrastic satire on the Jacobite army known as *The Highland Host*,' which was published in 1678.

*Francis Sempill* (died between 1680 and 1685) was a song-writer. He was a son of the above-mentioned Robert Sempill.

## IRISH POETS

*Thomas Southerne* (1659-1746) was a dramatic poet who wrote ten plays of very unequal merit. Only two, indeed, are remembered as giving a fair idea of the extent of his genius. These are *Isabella*; or, *The Fatal Marriage*, and a pathetic drama called *Oroonoko*. Southerne was born in Dublin and educated at Trinity College, but he migrated to England in 1678, and studied law at the Middle Temple. Subsequently he went into the army, and obtained his commission as Captain under the Duke of York, at the time of the Duke of Monmouth's insurrection. It is thought that he was at the Battle of Sedgemoor. *Oroonoko* is the story of an African prince who was stolen from his kingdom of Angola, and carried away to an island in the West Indies. Mr. Hallam remarks that Southerne was the first English writer to denounce the traffic in slaves and the cruelties of their West Indian bondage. 'Tenderness and pathos,' says Mr. Shaw, 'may be asserted to be the primary characteristic of Southerne's dramatic genius.' We quote the following lines as a slight example :

*Imoinda.* How, how shall I receive you, how be worthy  
Of such endearments, all this tenderness?  
These are the transports of prosperity,  
When fortune smiles upon us.



*Oroonoko.* Let the fools  
 Who follow fortune live upon her smiles ;  
 All our prosperity is placed in love ;  
 We have enough of that to make us happy.  
 This little spot of earth you stand upon  
 Is more to me than the extended plains  
 Of my great father's kingdom. Here I reign  
 In full delights, in joys to power unknown ;  
 Your love my empire, and your heart my throne.

*Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery* (1621-1679), was the author of several poems and plays. Of his poems, the chief are : *A Poem on His Majesty's Happy Restoration*, *A Poem on the Death of Cowley*, *Poems on the Fasts and Festivals of the Church*.

#### FROM 'POEM ON THE DEATH OF COWLEY'

Oh, how severely man is used by Fate !  
 The covetous toil long for an estate ;  
 And having got more than their life can spend,  
 They may bequeath it to a son or friend :  
 But learning, in which none can have a share,  
 Unless they climb to it by time and care,  
 Learning, the truest wealth which man can have,  
 Does, with his body, perish in his grave.  
 To tenements of clay it is confin'd,  
 Though 'tis the noblest purchase of the mind :  
 Oh ! why can we thus leave our friends possess  
 Of all our acquisitions but the best ?  
 Still when we study Cowley, we lament,  
 That to the world he was no longer lent ;  
 Who, like a lightning, to our eyes was shown,  
 So bright he shin'd, and was so quickly gone.  
 Sure he rejoic'd to see his flame expire,  
 Since he himself could not have rais'd it higher ;  
 For when wise poets can no higher fly,  
 They would, like saints, in their perfection die.

*The Hon. Mrs. Monk* (1677-1715), daughter of Viscount Molesworth, and wife of George Monk, Esq., was born in Dublin in the year 1677. While yet a child she displayed much ability for learning, and soon acquired a knowledge of Latin, Spanish, and Italian. After her death, in 1715, her poems were published by her father, under the title of *Marinda : Poems and Translations upon Several Occasions*. One of her biographers says that her poems and translations 'show the true spirit and numbers of poetry, delicacy of turns, and justness of thought and expression.'

#### ON PROVIDENCE

As a kind mother with indulgent eye  
 Views her fair charge and melts with sympathy,  
 And one's dear face imprints with kisses sweet,  
 One to her bosom clasps, one on her knee  
 Softly sustains in pleasing dignity,



And one permits to cling about her feet ;  
 And reads their various wants and each request  
 In look or action, or in sigh express'd :  
 This little supplicant in gracious style  
 She answers, that she blesses with a smile ;  
 Or if she blames their suit, or if approves,  
 And whether pleased or grieved, yet still she loves——  
 With like regard high providence Divine  
 Watches affectionate o'er human race :  
 One feeds, one comforts, does to all incline,  
 And each assists with kind parental care ;  
 Or once denying us some needful grace,  
 Only denies to move an ardent prayer ;  
 Or courted for imaginary wants,  
 Seems to deny, but in denying grants.

*Thomas Parnell* (1679-1718) was born and educated in Dublin. His father was the owner of large estates in Ireland. Thomas took Holy Orders, and eventually became Archdeacon of Clogher. He was buried, after a sad and chequered career, at Chester. His memory has been honoured by a biography from the pen of Oliver Goldsmith, who was 'proud of his distinguished countryman,' considering him the last of the great school of Pope and Swift. His works are miscellaneous, consisting of poems, songs, hymns, translations, epistles, etc. His chief poem is called *The Hermit*, a parable or story in rhyme, taken from the *Gesta Romanorum*. Pope called this poem 'very good.' His *Night-piece on Death* was 'indirectly preferred by Goldsmith to Gray's celebrated *Elegy*,' but this will be matter for surprise to most people who compare the two poems for themselves. Yet the lines of Parnell are beautiful enough, as the following extract will show :

How deep yon azure dyes the sky !  
 Where orbs of gold unnumbered lie ;  
 While through their ranks, in silver pride,  
 The nether crescent seems to glide.  
 The slumbering breeze forgets to breathe,  
 The lake is smooth and clear beneath,  
 Where once again the spangled show  
 Descends to meet our eyes below.  
 The grounds, which on the right aspire,  
 In dimness from the view retire :  
 The left presents a place of graves,  
 Whose wall the silent water laves.  
 That steeple guides thy doubtful sight  
 Along the livid gleams of night.  
 There pass, with melancholy state,  
 By all the solemn heaps of fate,  
 And think, as softly sad you tread  
 Above the venerable dead,  
 'Time was, like thee, they life possessed,  
 And time shall be that thou shalt rest.'



*Nahum Tate* (1652-1715), son of the Rev. Dr. Faithful Tate, was born in Dublin, and educated at Trinity College, Dublin. He succeeded Shadwell as Poet-Laureate in 1692, which dignity he held until his death in 1715. His poetical works include *Panacea*, a poem on the prosaic subject of tea ; a number of birthday odes ; and a metrical version of the Psalms, executed in conjunction with the Rev. Dr. Nicholas Brady, Chaplain to King William and Queen Mary.

*Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon* (1634-1685), was nephew and godson to the celebrated Earl of Strafford. He was the author of a poetical *Essay on Translated Verse*, a translation of Horace's *Art of Poesy*, and some minor verses. He is spoken of with favour by Alexander Pope, who says of him :

In all Charles's days  
Roscommon only boasts unspotted bays.

He died of gout in 1685, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Dr. Johnson says that at the moment in which he expired he quoted these two lines of his own *Dies Ira* :

My God, my Father, and my Friend,  
Do not forsake me in the end.

### WELSH POETS

*Thomas Jones* (1590-1620) was a celebrated antiquary, poet, and genealogist. He was born in Tregaron, in Cardiganshire. Being a man of superior information, he was looked upon by the vulgar as a magician.

*Hugh Morris* (1622-1709) was a poet of some eminence, and one of the best song-writers that have appeared in Wales. He was born in the county of Denbigh. A complete edition of his works was published by the Rev. Walter Davies in 1820.

*Rees Prichard* (1579-1644) was an eminent poet, and the author of the well-known *Canwyll y Cymry*. He was educated at Jesus College, Oxford, and became Chancellor of St. David's Cathedral.



## GREATER POETS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

### ENGLISH POETS

#### ALEXANDER POPE

1688-1744

'I LISPED in numbers, for the numbers came.' Such were the words in which Alexander Pope announced to the world the now well-known fact that he began to write poetry very shortly after he had left the nursery. His name stands far above all poets of his time.

Pope was born in London in 1688. His father was a member of an old Roman Catholic family with respectable traditions. Having achieved some commercial success as a linen-draper, he was enabled to retire to a comfortable home at Benfield, near Windsor, while the future poet was yet a boy. In this rural home, situated in a lovely neighbourhood, Alexander had opportunities for feeding his imagination and storing his mind with facts and fancies drawn direct from Nature, whose gentle teaching he began early to imbibe and assimilate. It soon became evident to all who knew him that he was possessed of more than ordinary powers—in fact, that he was a genius. His earliest tutor was the priest of the family, and he also received some little education at two Roman Catholic schools, at one of which he made his master the subject of an early attempt at verse in the shape of a lampoon. His precocity was from the first nothing short of extraordinary, and he is said to have been full of literary ambition from the moment he learnt to read. His childish admiration was lavished on Dryden. Indeed, he was so possessed by the spirit of enthusiasm concerning the illustrious veteran that in his thirteenth



year he induced a friend to go with him to Wills' Coffee-house, which Dryden was in the habit of frequenting, in order that he might obtain a glimpse of the great poet. Dryden's death took place in the same year. More fortunate than Ovid, he was encouraged by his father in his literary tastes, and even helped by him. He may be said to have begun his career as a poet at the age of sixteen, by the composition of a series of *Pastorals*.<sup>1</sup> His translations of *Statius* were published in 1705. In the same year were issued some modernized versions from Chaucer. It would seem from this that he was anxious to institute a parallel between himself and Dryden. The *Story of January and May*, and the *Prologue to the Wife of Bath's Tale* were the names of these early productions of his pen. The life of Pope, like that of Dryden, is practically the history of the period of English literature in which he lived. Like Dryden, he was constantly involved in literary squabbles. He was associated, either as friend or adversary, with Arbuthnot, Atterbury, Bolingbroke, Addison, Gay, Swift, Steele, Warburton, Dennis, Cibber, and Garth. He has—and in this, again, he resembles his great master—immortalized in the *Dunciad* a good many literary names that would otherwise have been doomed to oblivion. From the year 1709 he was untiring in the field of poetical composition, and he rose rapidly to the highest place amongst the poets of his time. The *Essay on Criticism*, which was written in 1709, was the first to make his reputation secure as a writer of the highest rank. In 1711 appeared the *Temple of Fame*, which is an imitation of Chaucer's *House of Fame*, and to this period also belongs *The Rape of the Lock*, which is said to be 'incomparably superior to every heroic comic composition that the world has hitherto seen.'<sup>2</sup> The pastoral eclogues, entitled *Windsor Forest*, were issued in 1713, and a volume of poems in 1717. By the year 1720 he had translated the whole of the *Iliad* into English verse, and in 1725 the poet completed a translation of the *Odyssey*.

Pope's appearance was against him. He was in stature an absolute dwarf, and so deformed was he that his life has been described with some truth as 'one long disease.' Indeed, his life was preserved only by the most careful and constant nursing, and to follow a profession of any kind was quite out of the ques-

<sup>1</sup> Published in 1709.

<sup>2</sup> Shaw's 'English Literature,' by Sir W. Smith, p. 288.



tion. Though his constitution was so delicate, he was nevertheless an interesting and pleasing child, with a goodly, if not a beautiful, countenance, and his voice was so sweet and musical that it won for him the name of 'the little nightingale.'

Pope made a fortune by his translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. 'Not sixty years before,' says Dr. Collier, 'a blind old man (Milton) in the same great city had sold the greatest epic of modern days for £18. Pope, whose poetic fame grows pale before the splendour of Milton's genius, as the stars die out before the sun, pocketed more than £8,000 for a clever translation. Like Dryden translating Virgil, Pope did little more than reproduce the sense of Homer's verse in smooth and neatly-balanced English couplets, leaving the spirit behind in the glorious rough old Greek, that tumbles on the ear like the roar of a winter sea.' The great scholar Bentley is said to have remarked upon the volumes which were sent to him by the poet, 'It is a pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer.'

Pope was assisted by Fenton and Broome in his translation of the *Odyssey*. In 1728 he published the *Dunciad*. Lewis Theobald was the hero in the first instance, but when the fourth book was published, in 1742, under the influence of Warburton, the King of the Dunces was not Theobald, but Colley Cibber. This has been called 'the fiercest and finest of Pope's satires.'<sup>1</sup> It was in conversation with Bolingbroke that he conceived the idea of the *Essay on Man*. It is in four epistles, which are addressed to Bolingbroke. In the first Man is reviewed in his relation to the Universe, in the second in his relation to himself, in the third in his relation to Society, and in the fourth in relation to his pursuit of happiness. In this poem the writer gives unmistakable proof of his marvellous power of handling an abstract philosophical subject. The verse is smooth and melodious throughout, and the illustrations are drawn with consummate skill.

*The Rape of the Lock* is perhaps the best-known and most popular of the works of Pope. The subject of the poem is supplied by the frolicsome conduct of Lord Petre, a man of fashion in the time of Queen Anne, and attached to the Court, in cutting off a ringlet from the head of a charming and beautiful young Maid of Honour named Arabella Fermor. Pope showed the poem at first to Addison, who pronounced it 'a delicious little

<sup>1</sup> 'Incomparably the fiercest, most sweeping, and most powerful literary satire that exists in the whole range of literature.'—SHAW.



thing,' and advised him not to alter it in any way, lest he should spoil it. This advice Pope did not altogether abide by. 'Fortunately for his glory, though the critic's counsel was as prudent as it certainly was sincere, he incorporated into his poem the delicious supernatural agency of the sylphs and gnomes, beings which he borrowed from the fantastic theories of Paracelsus and the Rosicrucian philosophers.' In five cantos the poet tells the woes of Belinda, and gives the world an unequalled description of the lives and doings of people of fashion in the reign of Queen Anne. The end of the ringlet, the theft of which gave occasion for the writing of this inimitable satire, is a place amongst the stars of heaven, where, if we may trust the poem, it has given forth its lustre ever since as the constellation known as the Tress of Berenice.

The dwarfish poet was not without his own romance. He was consumed by an unconcealed passion for the Lady Mary Montagu, the famous letter-writer. Love in time turned to hate, the result of cold contempt on the part of the lady, who had occasion to speak of her former lover in late years as 'the wicked wasp of Twickenham.' On the 30th of May, 1744, literally worn away by asthma and various other disorders, Pope passed away at the villa at Twickenham which he had purchased on the death of his father.

No character has been more canvassed than that of Pope, both from a personal and a literary point of view. As a man, he was a strange mixture. Peevishness, childishness, malignity, selfishness, avarice, duplicity, meanness, all these are amongst the faults that have been laid to his charge. On the other hand, we are told that he was remarkable for such traits as gentleness, generosity, tolerance, piety, candour, and beautiful filial affection. The chief biographies of Pope are those by Johnson, Warburton, Bowles, Roscoe, and Warton. For a general estimate of his poetry, Johnson's beautiful parallel between him and Dryden should be carefully studied.

#### FROM THE 'ESSAY ON CRITICISM'

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,  
 As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance.  
 'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,  
 The sound must seem an echo to the sense.  
 Soft is the strain when zephyr gently blows,  
 And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;  
 But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,  
 The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar;



When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,  
 The line too labours, and the words move slow ;  
 Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,  
 Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main.  
 Hear how Timotheus' varied lays surprise,  
 And bid alternate passions fall and rise !  
 While at each change, the son of Libyan Jove  
 Now burns with glory, and then melts with love ;  
 Now his fierce eyes with sparkling fury glow ;  
 Now sighs steal out, and tears begin to flow :  
 Persians and Greeks like turns of nature found,  
 And the world's victor stood subdued by sound !  
 The pow'r of music all our hearts allow,  
 And what Timotheus was, is DRYDEN now.

FROM 'THE RAPE OF THE LOCK'

THE TOILET

And now, unveil'd, the toilet stands display'd,  
 Each silver vase in mystic order laid.  
 First, robed in white, the nymph intent adores,  
 With head uncover'd, the cosmetic powers.  
 A heavenly image in the glass appears,  
 To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears ;  
 Th' inferior priestess, at her altar's side,  
 Trembling, begins the sacred rites of Pride.  
 Unnumber'd treasures ope at once, and here  
 The various offerings of the world appear ;  
 From each she nicely culls, with curious toil,  
 And decks the goddess with the glittering spoil.  
 This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,  
 And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.  
 The tortoise here and elephant unite,  
 Transformed to combs, the speckled and the white.  
 Here files of pins extend their shining rows,  
 Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billet-doux.  
 Now awful Beauty puts on all its arms ;  
 The fair each moment rises in her charms,  
 Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,  
 And calls forth all the wonders of her face ;  
 Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,  
 And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.  
 The busy sylphs<sup>1</sup> surround their darling care :  
 These set the head, and those divide the hair ;  
 Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown ;  
 And Betty's praised for labours not her own.

FROM THE 'ESSAY ON MAN'

UNIVERSALITY OF GOD IN NATURE

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
 Whose body Nature is, and God the soul ;  
 That, chang'd through all, and yet in all the same ;  
 Great in the Earth, as in th' ethereal frame ;

<sup>1</sup> Spirits of the air, in the Rosicrucian philosophy, from the Greek *silphe*, a kind of beetle, or a moth supposed to renew its youth like the phoenix.



Warms in the Sun, refreshes in the breeze,  
 Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees ;  
 Lives through all life, extends through all extent ;  
 Spreads undivided, operates unspent ;  
 Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,  
 As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart ;  
 As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,  
 As the rapt seraph that adores and burns :  
 To Him no high, no low, no great, no small :  
 He fills, He bounds, connects, and equals all.

#### SYNTHESIS OF HUMAN LOVE

God loves from whole to parts : but human soul  
 Must rise from individual to the whole.  
 Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,  
 As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake :  
 The centre mov'd, a circle straight succeeds ;  
 Another still, and still another spreads ;  
 Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace ;  
 His country next ; and next all human race ;  
 Wide and more wide, th' o'erflowings of the mind  
 Take every creature in, of every kind ;  
 Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,  
 And Heaven beholds its image in his breast.

#### REV. EDWARD YOUNG, D.C.L.

1681-1765

EDWARD YOUNG was a distinguished writer of sacred poetry. He was the only son of the Rev. Dr. Edward Young, Rector of Upham, and was born in June, 1681. He was educated at Winchester and at New College, Oxford. At the University he obtained a law-fellowship in 1708, and proceeded to the degree of Doctor of Civil Law in 1719. At first his intention was to follow the legal profession, but this idea he abandoned, and took Holy Orders. One of his early examiners, Tindal, said of him, 'The other boys I can always answer, because I know whence they have their arguments ; but that fellow Young is always pestering me with something of his own.' He tried unsuccessfully to enter Parliament.

Young began his career as a poet in 1712 with an *Epistle to the Right Hon. George Lansdowne*. 'This adulatory poem was composed in the same servile spirit as characterized many of Young's subsequent performances. To lavish praise upon the great, and to seek for place and preferment, distinguished him from the commencement of his progress in life until its close.'



Between the years 1725 and 1728 seven satires were issued from the press, entitled *Love of Fame, the Universal Passion*, which brought him into considerable prominence, and won for him the praise of Dr. Johnson and Joseph Warton. It is written in a manner which bears some resemblance to that of Pope, though not equal in merit to any of the greater poet's masterpieces. In referring the vices and follies of mankind chiefly to the vanity and the foolish desire of applause, Young exhibits a false and narrow view of human motives; but there are many passages in the epistles which compose the satire that exhibit strong powers of observation and description, and a keen and vigorous expression which, though sometimes degenerating into that tendency to paradox and epigram which are the prevailing defect of Young's genius, are not unworthy of his great model. The passage describing the character of women, may be compared, without altogether losing in the parallel, to Pope's admirable work on the same subject.

The first parts of *Night Thoughts*, the exquisite poem with which the name of Young must ever be most closely identified, appeared in 1742. The conception of this work is said to have taken its rise in the continued misfortunes which befell its author in his own family circle. He had married a young widow, Lady Elizabeth Lee, in 1731. She was the daughter of the Earl of Lichfield, and by her the poet had a son whose irregularities caused his parents a great deal of sorrow. Further, Lady Elizabeth had two daughters by her first marriage, both of whom died within a short time, and, finally, the unhappy poet was bereaved of his wife also. The poem, which establishes the claim of its author to be called the most illustrious of the secondary poets of his epoch, has been universally admired and praised, in spite of that suggestion of gloom which is to be accounted for in the main by the facts just noted. Its critics have been numerous, but they have been kind to one who deserves kindness at their hands. Dr. Aikin, in his *Select Lives of the British Poets*, says: 'It imitates no one, and has no imitators. Its spirit, indeed, is gloomy and severe, and its theology awful and overwhelming; yet it presents reflections which are inculcated with a force of language and sublimity of imagination almost unparalleled.' Dr. Johnson has expressed his opinion that 'the author has exhibited a very wide display of original poetry, variegated with deep reflections and



striking allusions—a wilderness of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue and of every colour. The excellence of this work is not exactness; particular lines are not to be regarded; the power is in the whole, and in the whole there is a magnificence like that ascribed to Chinese plantations, the magnificence of vast extent and endless diversity.' Of more modern critics, we may quote the words of Campbell. He says: 'The reader most sensitive to this eminent poet's faults must, however, have felt that there is in him a spark of originality, which is never long extinguished, however far it may be from vivifying the entire mass of his poetry. Many and exquisite are his touches of sublime expression, of profound reflection, and of striking imagery. It is recalling but a few of these to allude to his description, in the eighth book, of the man whose thoughts are not of this world, to his simile of the traveller at the opening of the ninth book, to his spectre of the antediluvian world, and to some parts of his very unequal description of the conflagration; above all, to that noble and familiar image,

When final ruin fiercely drives  
Her ploughshare o'er creation.

It is true that he seldom, if ever, maintains a flight of poetry long free from oblique associations; but he has individual passages which philosophy might make her texts, and experience select for her mottoes.'

Young had a happy method of saying things in language which challenges the memory to forget. His verse is full of 'wise saws' which linger in the mind and spring to the lips as appropriate quotations. 'Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep'; 'Man makes a death which Nature never made'; 'A Christian is the highest style of man'; 'Be wise to-day: 'tis madness to defer'; 'A deathbed's a detector of the heart'; 'All men think all men mortal but themselves'; 'Procrastination is the thief of time'; 'By night an Atheist half believes a God,' are proverbs, as are many other isolated lines from this great poem.

It is said that Young's anxiety for advancement did not cease to exist as he grew older. He was endowed by the Duke of Wharton with an annuity of £200. When he took Holy Orders, in his fiftieth year, he was appointed Rector of Welwyn by his college, and was made Chaplain to King George II. Yet at



the age of eighty he solicited further advancement from Archbishop Secker, and was appointed Clerk of the Closet to the Princess Dowager of Wales. When on his deathbed he refused to see his profligate son, though he sent him his forgiveness, and made him his heir. He died at the age of eighty-three, in the year 1765.

## APOSTROPHE TO NIGHT

O majestic Night !  
 Nature's great ancestor ! Day's elder born !  
 And fated to survive the transient sun !  
 By mortals and immortals seen with awe !  
 A starry crown thy raven brow adorns,  
 An azure zone thy waist ; clouds, in heaven's loom  
 Wrought through varieties of shape and shade,  
 In ample folds of drapery divine,  
 Thy flowing mantle form, and, heaven throughout,  
 Voluminously pour thy pompous train :  
 Thy gloomy grandeurs—Nature's most august,  
 Inspiring aspect—claim a grateful verse,  
 And, like a sable curtain starr'd with gold,  
 Drawn o'er my labours past, shall clothe the scene.

## THOUGHTS ON TIME

*Learn time  
feeling*

The bell strikes one. We take no note of time  
 But from its loss : to give it then a tongue  
 Is wise in man. As if an angel spoke,  
 I feel the solemn sound. If heard aright,  
 It is the knell of my departed hours.  
 Where are they ? With the years beyond the flood  
 It is the signal that demands dispatch :  
 How much is to be done ? My hopes and fears  
 Start up alarmed, and o'er life's narrow verge  
 Look down—on what ? A fathomless abyss !  
 A dread eternity ! how surely mine !  
 And can eternity belong to me,  
 Poor pensioner on the bounties of an hour ?  
 O time ! than gold more sacred ; more a load  
 Than lead to fools, and fools reputed wise.  
 What moment granted man without account ?  
 What years are squandered, wisdom's debt unpaid !  
 Our wealth in days all due to that discharge.  
 Haste ! haste ! he lies in wait, he's at the door .  
 Insidious Death ; should his strong hand arrest  
 No composition sets the prisoner free  
 Eternity's inexorable chain  
 Fast binds, and vengeance claims the full arrear

## THE EMPTINESS OF RICHES

Can gold calm passion, or make reason shine ?  
 Can we dig peace or wisdom from the mine ?  
 Wisdom to gold prefer, for 'tis much less  
 To make our fortune than our happiness :  
 That happiness which great ones often see,  
 With rage and wonder, in a low degree,



## A HISTORY OF BRITISH POETRY

Themselves unblest'd. The poor are only poor.  
 But what are they who droop amid their store ?  
 Nothing is meaner than a wretch of state ;  
 The happy only are the truly great.  
 Peasants enjoy like appetites with kings,  
 And those best satisfied with cheapest things.  
 Could both our Indies buy but one new sense,  
 Our envy would be due to large expense ;  
 Since not, those pomps which to the great belong  
 Are but poor arts to mark them from the throng  
 See how they beg an alms of Flattery ;  
 They languish ! oh, support them with a lie !  
 A decent competence we fully taste ;  
 It strikes our sense, and gives a constant feast ;  
 More we perceive by dint of thought alone ;  
 The rich must labour to possess their own,  
 To feel their great abundance, and request  
 Their humble friends to help them to be blest ;  
 To see their treasure, hear their glory told,  
 And aid the wretched impotence of gold.  
 But some, great souls ! and touch'd with warmth divine,  
 Give gold a price, and teach its beams to shine ;  
 All hoarded treasures they repute a load,  
 Nor think their wealth their own, till well bestow'd  
 Grand reservoirs of public happiness,  
 Through secret streams diffusively they bless,  
 And, while their bounties glide, conceal'd from view,  
 Relieve our wants, and spare our blushes too.

## PROCRASTINATION

Be wise to-day ; 'tis madness to defer :  
 Next day the fatal precedent will plead ;  
 Thus on, till wisdom is pushed out of life.  
 Procrastination is the thief of time ;  
 Year after year it steals, till all are fled,  
 And to the mercies of a moment leaves  
 The vast concerns of an eternal scene.  
 If not so frequent, would not this be strange ?  
 That 'tis so frequent, this is stranger still.  
 Of man's miraculous mistakes, this bears  
 The palm, ' That all men are about to live,'  
 For ever on the brink of being born :  
 All pay themselves the compliment to think  
 They one day shall not drivel, and their pride  
 On this reversion takes up ready praise ;  
 At least their own their future selves applaud ;  
 How excellent that life they ne'er will lead !  
 Time lodged in their own hands is Folly's vails ;  
 That lodged in Fate's to wisdom they consign,  
 'The thing they can't but purpose, they postpone  
 'Tis not in folly not to scorn a fool,  
 And scarce in human wisdom to do more.  
 All promise is poor dilatory man,  
 And that through every stage. When young, indeed,  
 In full content we sometimes nobly rest,  
 Unanxious for ourselves, and only wish,  
 As duteous sons, our fathers were more wise.  
 At thirty, man suspects himself a fool ;  
 Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan ;



At fifty, chides his infamous delay,  
 Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve ;  
 In all the magnanimity of thought  
 Resolves, and re-resolves ; then dies the same.  
 And why ? Because he thinks himself immortal.  
 All men think all men mortal but themselves ;  
 Themselves, when some alarming shock of fate  
 Strikes through their wounded hearts the sudden dread ;  
 But their hearts wounded, like the wounded air,  
 Soon close ; where passed the shaft no trace is found,  
 As from the wing no scar the sky retains,  
 The parted wave no furrow from the keel,  
 So dies in human hearts the thought of death :  
 E'en with the tender tear which nature sheds  
 O'er those we love, we drop it in their grave.

## WILLIAM COLLINS

1721-1759

'THE defect of Collins' poetry,' says Dr. Craik, 'is that there is too little of earth in it; in the purity and depth of its beauty it resembles the bright blue sky.' This can hardly be looked upon as a serious fault, nor was the censure meant to be at all severe. It is a concise way of summing up the failure and success of a writer of unquestioned genius.

William Collins was born in Chichester in the year 1721. His father followed the trade of a hatter in that city. Through the assistance of friends the future poet was enabled to go to Winchester School and the University of Oxford. He was elected a scholar of Magdalen, and, having taken his degree, went to London full of ambition to achieve literary distinction. Apart from some triumphant successes in this direction, his career was a miserable one. His talents were such as might, under favourable circumstances, have raised him to the front rank of British poets, had not a tendency to self-indulgence sapped the strength of his mind. It is said that he had a latent tendency to madness, which gradually developed under stress of unsatisfied ambition until it culminated in complete and hopeless imbecility. He died at Chichester in 1759. Dr. Johnson, who was greatly drawn towards him as a man, though he deals with him somewhat severely as a poet, says 'his morals were pure and his opinions pious,' adding that 'at least he preserved the source of action unpolluted, and his principles were never shaken,' his distinctions



of right and wrong never being confounded. He sent for Johnson in the midst of his malady, and was found by the great doctor reading the New Testament, which he always carried about with him. 'I have but one book,' said the poet, 'but it is the best.'

He first published *Persian Eclogues* in 1742. These are not his best works. The flower of his poetical genius is rather to be found in his *Odes*, which appeared in 1746. Mr. Spalding says of them :

'The *Odes* of Collins are fuller of the fine and spontaneous enthusiasm of genius than any other poems ever written by one who wrote so little. We close his tiny volume with the same disappointed surprise which overcomes us when a harmonious piece of music suddenly ceases unfinished. His range of tones is very wide : it extends from the warmest rapture of self-entranced imagination to a tenderness which makes some of his verses sound like gentle weeping.'

*The Passions* is his most popular poem, though it cannot critically be accounted the best. His odes on *The Poetical Character* and *Manners* are superior, and give a fuller insight into his imaginative genius. *Fear*, *Pity*, *Simplicity*, and *Mercy* are also amongst the subjects which his pen has smoothly and deftly touched upon. His *Ode to Evening*, and *Verses on the Memory of Thomson*, are likely to live as long as poetry retains its charm for the heart and ear. The former has been compared to a melody of Schubert for beauty and sweetness.

After his death a long ode on the *Superstitions of the Highlands* was found amongst his papers. It was unfinished, but contains many fine passages.

Poetic things without number have been said of the writings of this unfortunate man, and amongst them is the justifiable statement that 'the melody of his verse swells and falls like the impulsive tones of an Eolian harp.'

In the cathedral at Chichester there is a monument by Flaxman which represents the poet in a reclining position, with the New Testament open before him. His lyre and one of his poems are at his feet, neglected, and the effigies of Love and Pity are keeping vigil.

Come, Pity, come ! By Fancy's aid,  
Ev'n now my thoughts, relenting maid !  
Thy temple's pride design :  
Its southern site, its truth complete,  
Shall raise a wild enthusiast heat  
In all who view the shrine.



## ODE TO PEACE

O thou, who bad'st thy turtles bear,  
 Swift from his grasp, thy golden hair,  
 And sought'st thy native skies ;  
 When war, by vultures drawn from far,  
 To Britain bent his iron car,  
 And bade his storms arise !

Tired of his rude tyrannic sway,  
 Our youth shall fix some festive day,  
 His sullen shrines to burn :  
 But thou who hear'st the turning spheres,  
 What sounds may charm thy partial ears,  
 And gain thy blest return !

O peace, thy injured robes up-bind !  
 O rise ! and leave not one behind  
 Of all thy beamy train ;  
 The British lion, goddess sweet,  
 Lies stretched on earth to kiss thy feet,  
 And own thy holier reign.

Let others court thy transient smile,  
 But come to grace thy western isle,  
 By warlike honour led ;  
 And, while around her ports rejoice,  
 While all her sons adore thy choice,  
 With him for ever wed !

## ODE TO A LADY

ON THE DEATH OF COLONEL CHARLES ROSS, IN THE ACTION AT  
 FONTENOY. WRITTEN MAY, 1745.

While, lost to all his former mirth,  
 Britannia's genius bends to earth,  
 And mourns the fatal day :  
 While, stained with blood, he strives to tear  
 Unseemly from his sea-green hair  
 The wreaths of cheerful May :

The thoughts which musing pity pays,  
 And fond remembrance loves to raise,  
 Your faithful hours attend ;  
 Still fancy, to herself unkind,  
 Awakes to grief the softened mind,  
 And points the bleeding friend.

By rapid Scheld's descending wave  
 His country's vows shall bless the grave,  
 Where'er the youth is laid :  
 That sacred spot the village hind  
 With every sweetest turf shall bind,  
 And peace protect the shade.

O'er him, whose doom thy virtues grieve,  
 Aerial forms shall sit at eve,  
 And bend the pensive head !  
 And, fallen to save his injured land,  
 Imperial honour's awful hand  
 Shall point his lonely bed !



The warlike dead of every age,  
 Who fill the fair recording page,  
     Shall leave their sainted rest ;  
 And, half reclining on his spear,  
 Each wondering chief by turns appear,  
     To hail the blooming guest :

Old Edward's sons unknown to yield,  
 Shall crowd from Cressy's laurelled field,  
     And gaze with fixed delight ;  
 Again for Britain's wrongs they feel,  
 Again they snatch the gleamy steel,  
     And wish the avenging fight.

If, weak to soothe so soft a heart,  
 These pictured glories naught impart,  
     To dry thy constant tear :  
 If yet, in sorrow's distant eye,  
 Exposed and pale thou see'st him lie,  
     Wild war insulting near :

Where'er from time thou court'st relief,  
 The muse shall still, with social grief,  
     Her gentlest promise keep ;  
 Even humbled Harting's cottage vale  
 Shall learn the sad repeated tale,  
     And bid her shepherds weep.

## ODE IN 1746

How sleep the brave who sink to rest,  
 By all their country's wishes blessed !  
 When spring, with dewy fingers cold,  
 Returns to deck their hallowed mould,  
 She there shall dress a sweeter sod  
 Than fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung ;  
 By forms unseen their dirge is sung ;  
 There honour comes, a pilgrim grey,  
 To bless the turf that wraps their clay ;  
 And freedom shall awhile repair,  
 To dwell, a weeping hermit, there !

## ODE TO MERCY

## STROPHE

O thou, who sitt'st a smiling bride  
 By valour's armed and awful side,  
 Gentlest of sky-born forms, and best adored ;  
     Who oft with songs, divine to hear,  
     Winn'st from his fatal grasp the spear,  
 And hid'st in wreaths of flowers his bloodless sword !  
     Thou who, amidst the deathful field,  
     By godlike chiefs alone beheld,  
     Oft with thy bosom bare art found,  
 Pleading for him, the youth who sinks to ground :  
     See, mercy, see, with pure and loaded hands,  
     Before thy shrine my country's genius stands,  
 And decks thy altar still, though pierced with many a wound.



## ANTISTROPHE

When he whom even our joys provoke,  
 The fiend of nature, joined his yoke,  
 And rushed in wrath to make our isle his prey ;  
 Thy form, from out thy sweet abode,  
 O'ertook him on his blasted road,  
 And stopped his wheels, and looked his rage away.  
 I see recoil his sable steeds,  
 That bore him swift to salvage deeds,  
 Thy tender melting eyes they own ;  
 O maid, for all thy love to Britain shown,  
 Where justice bars her iron tower,  
 To thee we build a roseate bower ;  
 Thou, thou shalt rule our queen, and share our monarch's throne !

## THOMAS CHATTERTON

1752-1770

HISTORY has little more melancholy to record than the brief career of Thomas Chatterton, who died by his own hand before he had completed his eighteenth year. He was born in Bristol in 1752, being the posthumous son of a schoolmaster, who also held the office of subchanter at the Cathedral. His education was received at a Blue-Coat school, but from this he passed to be apprenticed to an attorney at the early age of fifteen years. His native city abounds in remains of medieval buildings, and one of the most historic and notable of these is the magnificent parish church of St. Mary Redcliffe. Chatterton's grandfather had been sexton of this ancient structure, and doubtless the lad was early attracted to a study of its interesting history, as also to that of other monuments of a past age in Bristol. He became strongly addicted to the study of heraldry, architecture, black-letter, and old literature, and to English antiquities in general. His was one of the most wonderfully precocious minds the world has ever seen, and it is sad to record that he turned his genius to account by uttering a series of literary forgeries. These he ascribed to a priest whom he named Thomas Rowley, and the fact that this was a name hitherto unknown in the history of English literature was one of the circumstances which led to the ultimate discovery of the fraud. The poems which Chatterton composed under these singular and eccentric circumstances were very varied and of remarkable merit in every case. Inscribing them on old parchments which had been thrown aside as valueless, stored as rubbish



in an old chest in the muniment-room of St. Mary Redcliffe, and taken from thence by the poet's father to cover the copy-books of his pupils, Chatterton pretended to have found the said parchments with the poems written upon them. The apparently ancient manuscripts were so cleverly executed that critics of the highest literary culture were entirely deceived by them, and even when the fraud was suspected the deception was protracted by the seeming impossibility of their being the productions of a youth of Chatterton's age and opportunities. In these exercises of wasted talent he employed every possible means to give an air of antiquity. He carefully discoloured the parchments, and, aided by the practice he had as an attorney's clerk, he copied the handwriting of inscribed parchments. But he had set himself an impossible task, and, as a consequence, he made slips, in spite of his cleverness, which led to ultimate detection.

Mr. Henry Hewlett, in an able article contributed to the *Nineteenth Century*, says :

'The particulars of Chatterton's fabrication, in 1768-1769, of the poems which he attributed to Thomas Rowley, a priest of the fifteenth century, are too familiarly known to justify repetition. To a critical reader of our own day, modernness of thought and style will appear so plainly stamped upon the face of them that he may consider Professor Skeat's ample demonstration of their sham archaisms to be almost superfluous.' Professor Skeat tells us that 'had Chatterton's MS., now at the British Museum, been submitted to examination during his lifetime, it is impossible that any expert in the handwriting of the fifteenth century could have been for an instant deceived by them.' Mr. Hewlett goes on to say : 'It is well, however, to recall the fact that though Chatterton's imitations, touched as they were by brilliant flashes of genius, failed to baffle the acumen of Tyrwhitt, Warton, Gray, and Johnson, they successfully imposed upon many erudite antiquaries and scholars, including Dr. Milles, Dean of Exeter and President of the Antiquarian Society (who published a sumptuous edition of the poems, and learnedly expatiated upon their Homeric and Chaucerian affinities), Jacob Bryant, Lord Lyttelton, and Dr. Fry, President of St. John's, Oxford. It can scarcely be doubted that Chatterton baited his line to catch that "doctoral ignorance," as Montaigne calls it, which "knowledge so often begets." Vanity may be presumed to have prompted



his mystifications in the first instance, and pride to have induced him to persist in his original story ; but he may fairly be acquitted of sordid motives. It is pathetic to reflect that if his boyish peccadillo had been treated with a little less harshness, the tragedy of his fate might have been averted, and a fresh voice added to the choir of English poets.'

At the age of seventeen he went up to London, full of hope and ambition, to write for bread and fame. He worked hard, but was unsuccessful. He posed as a satirical poet, but quickly sank to the level of a literary hack. Driven to despair, he applied for the post of surgeon's mate in Africa. This appointment was denied him. Infidelity had laid its hand upon him, and he became a deist, but he is not accused of any greater vice than intemperance. The redeeming feature of his life and character consists in the fact that he sent the greater part of what little money he made to his mother and sisters. These he buoyed up with exaggerated accounts of his successes and future prospects. But he could not deceive them for long. On August 24, 1770, he shut himself up in his wretched garret, tore his manuscripts into fragments, took a dose of arsenic, and died amid the remnants of his unsuccessful bids for fame.

The chief charm of Chatterton's poems lies in a marvellous power of picturesque description. The poems which bear his name are, strangely enough, of inferior merit to those ascribed to Thomas Rowley, but they rise to a high level of poetic art.

#### FROM 'ELINOUR AND LUGA'

(AS A SPECIMEN OF CHATTERTON'S ANTIQUE LANGUAGE)

Systers in sorrowe, on thys daise-eyed bank,  
Where melancholych broods, we wylle lament,  
Be wette with mornynge dew and evene danke ;  
Lyche levynde<sup>1</sup> okes in eche the odher bent,  
Or lyche forlettenn<sup>2</sup> halles of merrimente,  
Whose gastlie mitches<sup>3</sup> holde the train of fryghte,  
Where lethale ravens bark, and owlets wake the nyghte.

#### THE RESIGNATION

O God, whose thunder shakes the sky,  
Whose eye this atom globe surveys,  
To thee, my only rock, I fly,  
Thy mercy in thy justice praise.

---

<sup>1</sup> Levined or lightning-scathed.

<sup>2</sup> Forsaken.

<sup>3</sup> Ruins.



The mystic mazes of thy will,  
 The shadows of celestial light,  
 Are past the powers of human skill ;  
 But what th' Eternal acts is right.

O teach me in the trying hour,  
 When anguish swells the dewy tear,  
 To still my sorrows, own thy power,  
 Thy goodness love, thy justice fear.

If in this bosom aught but thee,  
 Encroaching sought a boundless sway,  
 Omniscience could the danger see,  
 And mercy look the cause away.

Then why, my soul, dost thou complain ?  
 Why drooping seek the dark recess ?  
 Shake off the melancholy chain,  
 For God created all to bless.

\* \* \* \* \*

The gloomy mantle of the night,  
 Which on my sinking spirit steals,  
 Will vanish at the morning light,  
 Which God, my East, my Sun, reveals.

## THOMAS GRAY

1716-1771

THOMAS GRAY was the son of a money-scrivener in London, where the poet was born in 1716. His father was a man of very violent temperament, and gave his son but little encouragement, but his mother's nature was of quite the opposite kind. To her tender care the poet owed much of his success in life. He was educated at Eton and Cambridge, entering as a pensioner at Peterhouse College in 1734. After five years at the University, where he had distinguished himself in literature generally, and especially in poetry, he returned to London, and entered as a law student at the Inner Temple. His legal studies were interrupted for a time by his acceptance of an invitation from Horace Walpole to travel with him in France and Italy. In the course of the tour which followed the two friends quarrelled, and Gray returned to England in 1741, a short while before his father's death. His father left him a small patrimony, but he was in a great measure dependent on his mother and aunt for support. His scanty means, and possibly his tendency to indolence, caused him to give up the expensive and exacting profession of the law,



and he went back to Cambridge, where, with a very few intervals of absence, he spent the rest of his life.

Gray's first appearance as a poet was made in 1747, when he published his *Ode to Eton College*. In 1751 appeared the celebrated *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, which was received with universal and unstinted praise. In 1757 he published a less successful collection of *Pindaric Odes*. On the death of Colley Cibber, he was offered the post of Poet-Laureate, but this honour he declined. He was appointed, eleven years afterwards, to the Professorship of Modern History in his University, at a salary of £400 per annum. A martyr to gout in his later years, he was seized with a violent attack of the malady one day while at dinner in the College Hall, and died, after six days of suffering, on the 30th of July, 1771.

Gray's *Elegy*, as it is familiarly called, is one of the finest poems in any language, and every English schoolboy should be made to learn it by heart. 'The thoughts, indeed,' says Mr. Shaw, 'are obvious enough, but the dignity with which they are expressed, the immense range of allusion and description with which they are illustrated, and the finished grace of the language and versification in which they are embodied, give to this work something of that wonderful perfection of design and execution which we see in an antique statue or a sculptured gem.' It is universally admitted to be Gray's masterpiece, and Hazlitt has truthfully called it 'one of the most classical productions ever penned by a refined and thoughtful mind moralizing on human life.'

Of Gray's lyric compositions, the best are *The Bard*, the *Installation Ode* on the appointment of the Duke of Grafton as Chancellor of the University, the *Hymn to Adversity*, and his ode on the *Progress of Poesy*. *The Fatal Sisters* and the *Descent of Odin* are based upon Scandinavian legends.

It has been a matter of regret to his biographers and critics that Gray did not write more poetry, but it is certainly true of him that what he lacks in quantity he makes up for in the quality of his works.

The earliest biography of Gray was written by Mason, and published in 1775. In it the author quotes the following eloquent description of the character of the poet, written by the Rev. Mr. Temple, Rector of Mamhead :

'Perhaps he was the most learned man in Europe. He was



equally acquainted with the elegant and profound parts of science, and that not superficially, but thoroughly. He knew every branch of history, both natural and civil ; had read all the original historians of England, France, and Italy ; and was a great antiquarian. Criticism, metaphysics, morals, politics, made a principal part of his study ; voyages and travels of all sorts were his favourite amusements ; and he had a fine taste in painting, prints, architecture, and gardening. With such a fund of knowledge, his conversation must have been equally instructing and entertaining ; but he was also a good man—a man of virtue and humanity. . . . Perhaps it may be said, what signifies so much knowledge when it produced so little ? Is it worth taking so much pains to leave no memorial but a few of his poems ? But let it be considered that Gray was to others at least innocently employed ; to himself certainly beneficially. His time passed agreeably ; he was every day making some new acquisition in science ; his mind was enlarged, his heart softened, his virtue strengthened ; the world and mankind were shown to him without a mask, and he was taught to consider everything as trifling, and unworthy of the attention of a wise man, except the pursuit of knowledge and practice of virtue, in that state wherein God has placed us.'

#### ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE

Ye distant spires, ye antique towers,  
That crown the watery glade,  
Where grateful Science still adores  
Her Henry's<sup>1</sup> holy shade ;  
And ye, that from the stately brow  
Of Windsor's heights the expanse below  
Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey ;  
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among,  
Wanders the hoary Thames along  
His silver-winding way !

Ah, happy hills ! ah, pleasing shade !  
Ah, fields beloved in vain !  
Where once my careless childhood strayed,  
A stranger yet to pain !  
I feel the gales that from ye blow  
A momentary bliss bestow,  
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,  
My weary soul they seem to soothe,  
And, redolent of joy and youth,  
To breathe a second spring.

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<sup>1</sup> King Henry VI., founder of the College.



Say, Father Thames, for thou hast seen  
 Full many a sprightly race,  
 Disporting on thy margin green,  
 The paths of pleasure trace,  
 Who foremost now delight to cleave  
 With pliant arm thy glassy wave ?  
 The captive linnet which inthral ?  
 What idle progeny succeed  
 To chase the rolling circle's speed,  
 Or urge the flying ball ?

While some on earnest business bent  
 Their murmuring labours ply  
 'Gainst graver hours, that bring constraint,  
 To sweeten liberty ;  
 Some bold adventurers disdain  
 The limits of their little reign,  
 And unknown regions dare descry :  
 Still as they run they look behind ;  
 They hear a voice in every wind,  
 And snatch a fearful joy.

Gay hope 'is theirs, by fancy fed,  
 Less pleasing when possess'd ;  
 The tear forgot as soon as shed,  
 The sunshine of the breast.  
 Theirs buxom health of rosy hue,  
 Wild wit, invention ever new.  
 And lively cheer, of vigour born ;  
 The thoughtless day, the easy night,  
 The spirits pure, the slumbers light,  
 That fly th' approach of morn.

Alas ! regardless of their doom,  
 The little victims play !  
 No sense have they of ills to come,  
 Nor care beyond to-day :  
 Yet see how all around 'em wait  
 The ministers of human fate,  
 And black Misfortune's baleful train !  
 Ah ! show them where in ambush stand,  
 To seize their prey, the murd'rous band !  
 Ah ! tell them they are men !

These shall the fury Passions tear,  
 The vultures of the mind,  
 Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,  
 And Shame that skulks behind ;  
 Or pining Love shall waste their youth,  
 Or jealousy with rankling tooth,  
 That inly gnaws the secret heart,  
 And Envy wan, and faded Care,  
 Grim-visaged comfortless Despair,  
 And Sorrow's piercing dart.

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,  
 Then whirl the wretch from high,  
 To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,  
 And grinning Infamy.



## A HISTORY OF BRITISH POETRY

The stings of Falsehood those shall try,  
 And hard Unkindness' alter'd eye,  
 That mocks the tear it caused to flow ;  
 And Keen Remorse with blood defiled,  
 And moody Madness laughing wild  
 Amid severest woe.

Lo ! in the vale of years beneath  
 A grisly troop are seen,  
 The painful family of Death,  
 More hideous than their queen :  
 This racks the joints, this fires the veins,  
 That every labouring sinew strains,  
 Those in the deeper vitals rage ;  
 Lo ! Poverty, to fill the band,  
 That numbs the soul with icy hand,  
 And slow-consuming Age.

To each his sufferings ; all are men,  
 Condemn'd alike to groan ;  
 The tender for another's pain,  
 Th' unfeeling for his own.  
 Yet, ah ! why should they know their fate ?  
 Since Sorrow never comes too late,  
 And Happiness too swiftly flies.  
 Thought would destroy their paradise.  
 No more : where ignorance is bliss,  
 'Tis folly to be wise.

## ODE TO ADVERSITY

Daughter of Jove, relentless power,  
 Thou tamer of the human breast,  
 Whose iron scourge and torturing hour  
 The bad affright, afflict the best !  
 Bound in thy adamant chain,  
 The proud are taught to taste of pain,  
 And purple tyrants vainly groan  
 With pangs unfelt before, unpitied, and alone.

When first thy Sire to send on earth  
 Virtue, his darling child, design'd,  
 To thee he gave the heavenly birth,  
 And bade to form her infant mind.  
 Stern rugged nurse ! thy rigid lore  
 With patience many a year she bore ;  
 What sorrow was, thou bad'st her know,  
 And from her own she learn'd to melt at others' woe.

Scared at thy frown terrific, fly  
 Self-pleasing Folly's idle brood,  
 Wild Laughter, Noise, and thoughtless Joy,  
 And leave us leisure to be good.  
 Light they disperse, and with them go  
 The summer friend, the flattering foe ;  
 By vain Prosperity received,  
 To her they vow their truth, and are again believed.

Wisdom in sable garb array'd,  
 Immersed in rapturous thought profound,  
 And Melancholy, silent maid,  
 With leaden eye, that loves the ground,



Still on thy solemn steps attend ;  
 Warm Charity, the general friend,  
 With Justice, to herself severe,  
 And Pity, dropping soft the sadly-pleasing tear.

O, gently on thy suppliant's head,  
 Dread Goddess ! lay thy chastening hand,  
 Not in thy Gorgon terrors clad,  
 Nor circled with thy vengeful band :  
 (As by the impious thou art seen)  
 With thundering voice, and threatening mien,  
 With screaming Horror's funeral cry,  
 Despair, and fell Disease, and ghastly Poverty.

Thy form benign, O Goddess, wear,  
 Thy milder influence impart,  
 Thy philosophic train be there,  
 To soften, not to wound my heart.  
 The generous spark extinct revive,  
 Teach me to love and to forgive ;  
 Exact my own defects to scan,  
 What others are to feel, and know myself a Man.

#### ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
 The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,  
 The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,  
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,  
 And all the air a solemn stillness holds,  
 Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,  
 And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds ;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower  
 The moping owl does to the moon complain  
 Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bower,  
 Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,  
 Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,  
 Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,  
 The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,  
 The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,  
 The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,  
 No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,  
 Or busy housewife ply her evening care ;  
 No children run to lisp their sire's return,  
 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,  
 Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke ;  
 How jocund did they drive their team afield !  
 How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke !



Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,  
 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ;  
 Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,  
 The short and simple annals of the poor,  
  
 The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
 And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
 Await alike th' inevitable hour :  
 The paths of glory lead but to the grave.  
  
 Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault,  
 If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,  
 Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault  
 The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.  
  
 Can storied urn or animated bust  
 Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath ?  
 Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,  
 Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death ?  
  
 Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
 Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire ;  
 Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,  
 Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.  
  
 But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,  
 Rich with the spoils of Time, did ne'er unroll ;  
 Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,  
 And froze the genial current of the soul.  
  
 Full many a gem, of purest ray serene,  
 The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear ;  
 Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air.  
  
 Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast  
 The little tyrant of his fields withstood ;  
 Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,  
 Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.  
  
 Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,  
 The threats of pain and ruin to despise,  
 To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,  
 And read their history in a nation's eyes,  
  
 Their lot forbade ; nor circumscribed alone  
 Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined ;  
 Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,  
 And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,  
  
 The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,  
 To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,  
 Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride  
 With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.  
  
 Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,  
 Their sober wishes never learned to stray ;  
 Along the cool sequestered vale of life  
 They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.  
  
 Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect,  
 Some frail memorial still erected nigh,  
 With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,  
 Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.



Their name, their years, spelt by th' unlettered Muse,  
 The place of fame and elegy supply ;  
 And many a holy text around she strews,  
 That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,  
 This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,  
 Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,  
 Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind ?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,  
 Some pious drops the closing eye requires ;  
 Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,  
 Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonoured dead,  
 Dost in these lines their artless taste relate,  
 If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,  
 Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,  
 ' Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn  
 Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,  
 To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

' There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,  
 That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,  
 His listless length at noontide would he stretch,  
 And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

' Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,  
 Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove,  
 Now drooping, woful wan, like one forlorn,  
 Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

' One morn I missed him on the customed hill,  
 Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree ;  
 Another came ; nor yet beside the rill,  
 Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he !

' The next, with dirges due, in sad array,  
 Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him borne :  
 Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay  
 Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.'

#### THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth  
 A Youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown :  
 Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,  
 And Melancholy marked him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere ;  
 Heav'n did a recompense as largely send ;  
 He gave to Misery all he had—a tear ;  
 He gained from Heav'n ('twas all he wished) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,  
 Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,  
 (There they alike in trembling hope repose),  
 The bosom of his Father and his God.



## SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

1709-1784

'JOHNSON is JUPITER TONANS—he darts his lightning, and rolls his thunder, in the cause of virtue and piety. The language seems to fall short of his ideas ; he pours along, familiarizing the terms of philosophy with bold inversions and sonorous periods.'

There is no name which occupies so high a place in the literary annals of the eighteenth century as that of Samuel Johnson, of whom Cowper wrote the epitaph :

'Here Johnson lies—a sage by all allow'd,  
Whom to have bred may well make England proud—  
Whose prose was eloquence by wisdom taught,  
The graceful vehicle of virtuous thought ;  
Whose verse may claim—grave, masculine, and strong,  
Superior praise to the mere poet's song ;  
Who many a noble gift from heaven possess'd,  
And faith at last, alone worth all the rest.  
Oh ! man, immortal by a double prize,  
By fame on earth—by glory in the skies.'

The eldest son of Michael Johnson, a Lichfield bookseller, the poet was born in that city on the 18th of September, 1709. He first went to school in Lichfield, and afterwards was removed to Stourbridge. Subsequently he proceeded, at the age of nineteen, to Pembroke College, Oxford. At first his expenses were paid by a gentleman, Mr. Andrew Corbett, who had such a high appreciation of his genius that he maintained him at the University as a companion to his son. But this help was, for some reason not clear to the historian, soon discontinued, with the result that Johnson was compelled to leave Oxford without proceeding to his degree.

When at school and college, he was not remarkable for any marked degree of application to his studies. But his memory was exceptional. He never forgot anything he read. His method of reading can only be described as desultory, for he seldom, if ever, read an author right through, but 'rambled from one book to another, and by hasty snatches hoarded up a variety of knowledge.' Soon after he left Oxford his father died, having been for some time in straitened circumstances. Samuel was glad enough to accept the post of usher in a school at Market Bosworth, in Leicestershire, at a very modest salary. He was obliged to travel to his destination on foot, through lack of means



to pay for a conveyance. This post he soon tired of, however, and adopted the precarious career of a literary hack, a bookseller in Birmingham employing him to translate Labo's *Travels in Abyssinia* for the paltry sum of five guineas. In 1734, having completed this work, he returned to his native city, and tried to obtain subscriptions towards the publication of the Latin poems of Politian. But the attempt proved a failure, as did also his effort to obtain an appointment as tutor in a grammar-school at Brerewood, in Staffordshire. While residing in Birmingham he made the acquaintance of the celebrated Mrs. Porter, the wife of a respectable tradesman. This lady subsequently became a widow, and married Johnson in 1735. It is to be feared that this was a mere pecuniary venture on the part of the poet and philosopher, as the lady was devoid of personal or mental attractions, but was endowed with a modest fortune of £800. Yet, though this is the natural conclusion which has been arrived at by more than one of his many biographers, there are proofs extant that he became warmly attached to her. The money was expended on the establishment of a school, in which Johnson sought to teach Latin and Greek. This project met with but slight success. David Garrick was one of his pupils, the number of whom never rose to more than three, and after eighteen months of teaching, Johnson and Garrick went to London, the former taking with him the unfinished tragedy of *Irene*.

Johnson now began his literary career in London by contributing a Latin ode to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in March, 1737. Soon after his arrival in London he finished his tragedy, and failed in an attempt to have it produced at Drury Lane. But he received £49 for twelve pages of a *History of the Council of Trent*, contributed to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, but never carried on to completion. It was at this juncture that he became acquainted with the poet Savage, whose excesses led Johnson in 1738 to publish his poem entitled *London*, a satire which laid the foundation of his fame, though it was rejected by several publishers, and was at length sold to Dodsley for ten guineas. The friendship of Johnson and Savage has been thus described by Mr. Murphy :

‘ Both these singular characters had great parts, and they were equally under the pressure of want. Sympathy joined them in a league of friendship. Johnson has been often heard to relate



that he and Savage walked round Grosvenor Square, in London, until four in the morning, in the course of their conversation, reforming the world, dethroning princes, establishing new forms of government, and giving laws to several States of Europe, till, fatigued at length with their legislative office, they began to feel the want of refreshment, but could not muster up between them more than fourpence halfpenny. Savage, it is true, had many vices, but vice could never strike its roots in a mind like Johnson's, seasoned early with religion and the principles of moral rectitude.'

Johnson was again unsuccessful in an attempt to procure for himself a mastership in a grammar-school, this time at Appleby in Leicestershire, and at the same time a friend failed to obtain for him a degree from Trinity College, Dublin.<sup>1</sup> For two years afterwards he wrote diligently for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, though the remuneration which accrued to him for his labour seems to have been but small. Under the title of *Debates in the Senate of Lilliput*, he published reports of discussions in Parliament until 1743. Osborne, a bookseller in Gray's Inn, employed him to prepare a catalogue of the Earl of Oxford's library, which had been purchased for £13,000. Savage died in 1744, and Johnson published a biography of the unfortunate poet which amply maintained the reputation which his previous works had achieved. It contained forty-eight octavo pages, which were written in one day and night, and brought him fifteen guineas from Cave. Sir Joshua Reynolds read it through 'without changing his posture, as he perceived by the torpidness of one of his arms that he had rested on a chimney-piece by which he was standing.'

In 1747, when Garrick reopened Drury Lane Theatre, Johnson wrote a prologue for the occasion which has been praised as 'a masterly specimen of just dramatic criticism, as well as poetical excellence.' It was at this time that he laid before Lord Chesterfield his plan for his *Dictionary of the English Language*, which he undertook to produce in three years, but which took seven years to accomplish. It was completed in 1754. The intervening years saw the issue of *The Vanity of Human Wishes*,

<sup>1</sup> The degree of M.A. was a necessary qualification for the post Johnson sought. Pope, who admired Johnson's *London*, introduced him to Lord Gower, who made the unsuccessful attempt to procure the degree for the poet.



which is an imitation of the tenth satire of Juvenal. 'This is written,' says Mr. Shaw, 'in a loftier, more solemn and declamatory style than the preceding poem (*London*), and is a fine specimen of Johnson's dignified but somewhat gloomy rhetoric. The illustrations, drawn from history, of the futility of those objects which men sigh for—literary, military, or political renown, beauty, wealth, long life, or splendid alliances—Johnson has reproduced with splendid vigour; but he has added several of his own, where he shows a power and grandeur in no sense inferior to that of Juvenal. Thus, to the striking picture of the fall of Sejanus, related with such grim humour by the Roman satirist, Johnson has added the not less impressive picture of the disgrace of Wolsey, and his episode of Charles XII. is no unworthy counterpart to the portrait of Hannibal.' *Irene* was staged at length, in 1749, but it was not a great success, though produced by Garrick. The great actor, when asked why he did not accept another play from the same author, replied, 'When Johnson writes tragedy, declamation roars and passion sleeps; when Shakespeare wrote, he dipped his pen in his own heart.' The play is one of the few comparatively insignificant things this great writer has produced.

It was on the 20th of March, 1750, that Johnson issued the first number of the *Rambler*, which ran a brilliant course for two years. Of the 208 essays, Johnson wrote all but five. 'Before a line of it was written, he composed a beautiful and solemn prayer, imploring that the Divine Being would crown his efforts with success, to promote the intellectual and moral improvement of his fellow-creatures.' And this high aim was nobly accomplished. The loss of his wife caused him to write a sermon on her death, which was published, though never preached.

Johnson now turned his attention to the *Idler*, the *Adventurer*, and the *Connoisseur*, contributing also to the *Literary Magazine*. The death of his mother, in 1759, led him to write *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*, which he composed with great rapidity, in order to defray the funeral expenses. For this he received £125. He was now offered a good living in the Church, if he would take Holy Orders, but he declined, though he was a firm believer, an advocate of Tory principles, and a good Churchman.

In 1762 the Earl of Bute brought Johnson's name and claims



before the King, who rewarded his literary labours with a pension of £300 a year, which enabled him to pass the remaining portion of his life in comparative comfort, besides enabling him to mix in a class of society from which his previous poverty had excluded him. In 1764 he was honoured by the University of Dublin with the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, and in 1774 the University of Oxford made him a D.C.L. His last and greatest work was his *Lives of the Poets*, in which he included his life of Savage before-mentioned. It is a work of inestimable value, amusing and instructive. It has been regretted that it deals with a period which was not specially remarkable for poetical genius, but Johnson has made the most of the materials at his disposal, and has placed the world under a debt of gratitude for his able biographies of such greater poets as Milton, Dryden, Pope, Butler, Swift, Gray, and Cowley. It is less pompous and pretentious in style than many of his previous works, and 'has contributed to immortalize his name, and has secured that national esteem which party or partiality could not procure, and which even the injudicious zeal of his friends has not been able to lessen.'

Johnson had enjoyed the friendship of Mr. Thrale, a rich brewer and Member of Parliament, since the year 1765. This gentleman and his family had a residence in London and a villa at Streatham, at both of which Johnson was a frequent and honoured guest. In this capacity, too, he made many excursions to different parts of the United Kingdom, and once as far as Paris. In 1781 his *Lives* was published, and from that time his health began to give way. He became depressed, and was haunted with the fear of death. In June, 1783, he was struck with paralysis, which was followed by dropsy, and after a futile attempt to recuperate in his native air, he returned to London to live. The end came on the 13th of December, 1784, in his house in Bolt Court, Fleet Street. A few days afterwards he was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey, at the foot of Shakespeare's monument, and not far from David Garrick, his pupil and friend. He left his fortune, amounting to £1,500, to Francis Barber, his faithful servant. A monument stands to his memory in St. Paul's.

Lord Macaulay, in his review of Boswell's life of the great philosopher, says : ' The characteristic peculiarity of his intellect



was the union of great powers with low prejudices. If we judged him by the best part of his mind, we should place him almost as high as he was placed by the idolatry of Boswell ; if by the worst parts of his mind, we should place him even below Boswell himself.' But, rather than pursue this criticism in the somewhat severe manner in which Macaulay enlarges upon it, we prefer to quote, in concluding this brief memoir, from the writer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, who thus eloquently describes the personality, character, and genius of this great poet and critic :

' Dr. Johnson was a man of herculean form of body, as well as of great powers of mind. His stature was tall, his limbs were large, his strength was more than common, and his activity in early life had been greater than such a form gave reason to expect ; but he was subject to an infirmity of a convulsive kind resembling the distemper called St. Vitus's dance, and he had the seeds of so many diseases sown in his constitution that a short time before his death he declared that he hardly remembered to have passed one day wholly free from pain. He possessed extraordinary powers of understanding, which were much cultivated by reading, and still more by meditation and reflection. His memory was retentive, his imagination vigorous, and his judgment penetrating. He read with great rapidity, retained with wonderful vividness what he so easily collected, and possessed the power of reducing to order and system the scattered hints on any subject which he had gathered from different books. It would not be safe to claim for him the highest place amongst his contemporaries in any single department of literature, but he brought more mind to every subject, and had a greater variety of knowledge ready for all reasoning, than any other man that could easily be named. Though prone to superstition, he was in other respects so incredulous that Hogarth observed, whilst Johnson firmly believed the Bible, he seemed determined to believe nothing but the Bible. Of the importance of religion he had a strong sense ; his zeal for its interest was always awake, whilst profaneness of every kind was abashed in his presence. The same energy which he displayed in his literary productions, or even greater, was exhibited in his conversation, which was various, striking, and instructive. Like the sage in *Rasselas*, he spoke, and attention watched his lips ; he reasoned, and conviction closed his period. . . . As his purse and his house were



ever open to the indigent, so was his heart tender to those that wanted relief, and his soul susceptible of gratitude and every kind impression. He had a roughness in his manner which subdued the saucy and terrified the meek ; but it was only in his manner, for no man was more loved than Johnson by those that knew him, and his works will be read with admiration 'as long as the language in which they are written shall be understood.'

*FROM THE 'VANITY OF HUMAN WISHES'*

WOLSEY

In full-blown dignity see Wolsey stand,  
Law in his voice, and fortune in his hand :  
To him the church, the realm, their powers consign ;  
Through him the rays of regal bounty shine ;  
Turn'd by his nod the stream of honour flows,  
His smile alone security bestows :  
Still to new heights his restless wishes tower,  
Claim leads to claim, and power advances power ;  
Till conquest unresisted ceased to please,  
And rights submitted left him none to seize.  
At length his sovereign frowns—the trains of state  
Mark the keen glance, and watch the sign to hate :  
Where'er he turns, he meets a stranger's eye,  
His suppliants scorn him, and his followers fly ;  
Now drops at once the pride of awful state,  
The golden canopy, the glittering plate,  
The regal palace, the luxurious board,  
The liveried army, and the menial lord.  
With age, with cares, with maladies oppressed,  
He seeks the refuge of monastic rest.  
Grief aids disease, remember'd folly stings,  
And his last sighs reproach the faith of Kings.

ON THE DEATH OF DR. LEVETT, 1782

Condemned to Hope's delusive mine,  
As on we toil from day to day,  
By sudden blasts, or slow decline,  
Our social comforts drop away.

Well tried through many a varying year,  
See Levett to the grave descend,  
Officious, innocent, sincere,  
Of every friendless name the friend.

Yet still he fills affection's eye,  
Obscurely wise and coarsely kind ;  
Nor, lettered arrogance, deny  
Thy praise to merit unrefin'd.

When fainting nature called for aid,  
And hovering death prepared the blow,  
His vigorous remedy displayed  
The power of art without the show.



In misery's darkest cavern known,  
 His useful care was ever nigh,  
 Where hopeless anguish poured his groan,  
 And lonely want retired to die.

No summons mocked by chill delay,  
 No petty gain disdained by pride ;  
 The modest wants of every day,  
 The toil of every day supplied.

His virtues walked their narrow round,  
 Nor made a pause, nor left a void ;  
 And sure the Eternal Master found  
 The single talent well employed.

The busy day, the peaceful night,  
 Unfelt, uncounted, glided by ;  
 His frame was firm—his powers were bright,  
 Though now his eightieth year was nigh.

Then with no fiery throbbing pain,  
 No cold gradations of decay,  
 Death broke at once the vital chain,  
 And freed his soul the nearest way.

#### FROM 'THE VANITY OF HUMAN WISHES'

##### RESIGNATION TO THE WILL OF HEAVEN

Where then shall hope and fear their objects find ?  
 Must dull suspense corrupt the stagnant mind ?  
 Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate,  
 Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate ?  
 Must no dislike alarm, no wishes rise,  
 No cries invoke the mercies of the skies ?  
 Inquirer, cease ; petitions yet remain,  
 Which Heaven may hear, nor deem religion vain.  
 Still raise for good the supplicating voice,  
 But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice.  
 Safe in His power, whose eyes discern afar  
 The secret ambush of a spacious prayer.  
 Implore His aid, in His decisions rest,  
 Secure, whate'er He gives, He gives the best.  
 Yet when the sense of sacred presence fires,  
 And strong devotion to the skies aspires,  
 Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,  
 Obedient passions, and a will resign'd ;  
 For love, which scarce collective man can fill ;  
 For patience, sovereign o'er transmuted ill ;  
 For faith, that, panting for a happier seat,  
 Counts death kind Nature's signal of retreat :  
 These goods for man the laws of Heaven ordain ;  
 These goods He grants, who grants the power to gain ;  
 With these celestial Wisdom calms the mind,  
 And makes the happiness she does not find.



## JOHN GAY

1685-1732

JOHN GAY was born at Barnstaple, in Devonshire, in 1685. He was descended from a family of great respectability. Both his parents dying when the poet was about nine years of age, he was, after receiving a good education at the free school of Barnstaple, apprenticed to a silk-mercator in the Strand, London. The lad soon conceived a dislike for trade, and was negligent about the duties it imposed upon him. He was possessed of some private means, and was ambitious to distinguish himself by the exercise of those latent powers which he had early begun to feel were within him. His indentures of apprenticeship were cancelled, and he embarked upon a literary career.

Gay's first venture, entitled *Rural Sports*, was published in 1711. It was dedicated to Pope, who was himself young enough to greatly appreciate so signal an honour. A close friendship sprang up between the two, which lasted until the death of Gay cast a temporary gloom over the life of his companion and admirer. In 1712 Gay was appointed Secretary to Anne, Duchess of Monmouth. This office he held until 1714, when he went with the Earl of Clarendon to Hanover, the latter having been sent as Ambassador to the Court there. About this time he produced a parody on the style of Ambrose Philips, entitled the *Shepherd's Week*, and a mock-heroic poem called *Trivia; or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London*. The latter 'procured for the writer a high reputation, and is a fine specimen of that species of burlesque in which elevated language is employed in the detail of trifling, mean, or ludicrous circumstances.'

His *Fables*, by which he is best remembered, were published in 1726. They were primarily intended to be helpful to the Duke of Cumberland, to whom they were dedicated. They are written in octosyllabic metre, and are the best known of all the works of this poet, though they are by no means the best. Gay was ambitious, and was disappointed when in 1727 he was offered the insignificant post of Gentleman Usher to one of the young princesses. He indignantly refused to accept such a position.

The *Beggar's Opera* appeared in 1727. An attempt to have it produced at Drury Lane proved unsuccessful, but it was after-



wards staged with tremendous effect at Lincoln's Inn Fields. Its popularity was quick and enormous. It was written at the suggestion of Dean Swift; and Sir Walter Scott, writing on the subject in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, thus complimentarily refers to it: 'The eighteenth century gave rise to a new species of dramatic entertainment, which was the English opera. The Italian opera had been introduced into this country at a great expense, and to the prejudice, as it was supposed, of the legitimate drama. Gay, in aiming at another beyond a parody of this fashionable entertainment, and making it the vehicle of some political satire against Sir Robert Walpole's administration, unwittingly laid the foundation of the English opera. . . . The moral tendency of the *Beggar's Opera* has been much questioned. This play is chiefly remarkable as having given birth to the English opera.' But, though its morality may certainly be questioned, there can be no doubt as to its literary excellence. Indeed, it may fairly be looked upon as the most notable of his productions. The profits which accrued to its author were very large.

After this Gay published some more operas, amongst which was *Polly*, a kind of continuation of the *Beggar's Opera*. During the closing years of his life he was received into the household of the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry, 'where he seems to have been petted like some favourite lapdog.' Under this sheltering roof he died in 1732. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, and his friend Pope composed a very eulogistic epitaph for his tomb.

#### RURAL OCCUPATION

'Tis not that rural sports alone invite,  
But all the grateful country breathes delight;  
Here blooming Health exerts her gentle reign,  
And strings the sinews of the industrious swain.  
Soon as the morning lark salutes the day,  
Through dewy fields I take my frequent way,  
Where I behold the farmer's early care  
In the revolving labours of the year.

When the fresh Spring in all her state is crown'd,  
And high luxuriant grass o'erspreads the ground,  
The labourer with the bending scythe is seen,  
Shaving the surface of the waving green;  
Of all her native pride disrobes the land,  
And meads lays waste before his sweeping hand;  
While with the mounting sun the meadow glows,  
The fading herbage round he loosely throws.



## A HISTORY OF BRITISH POETRY

But, if some sign portend a lasting shower,  
 The experienced swain foresees the coming hour,  
 His sunburnt hands the scatt'ring fork forsake,  
 And ruddy damsels ply the saving rake ;  
 In rising hills the fragrant harvest grows,  
 And spreads along the field in equal rows.

Now, when the height of heaven bright Phoebus gains,  
 And level rays cleave wide the thirsty plains ;  
 When heifers seek the shade and cooling lake,  
 And in the middle pathway basks the snake ;  
 Oh ! lead me, guard me from the sultry hours,  
 Hide me, ye forests, in your closest bowers ;  
 Where the tall oak his spreading arms entwines,  
 And with the beech a mutual shade combines ;  
 Where flows the murmuring brook, inviting dreams,  
 Where bordering hazel overhangs the streams,  
 Whose rolling current winding round and round,  
 With frequent falls makes all the wood resound ;  
 Upon the mossy couch my limbs I cast,  
 And e'en at noon the sweets of evening taste.

## A FAIR ON THE THAMES, 1716

O roving Muse ! recall that wondrous year  
 When winter reigned in black Britannia's air ;  
 When hoary Thames, with frosted osiers crowned  
 Was three long moons in icy fetters bound.  
 The waterman, forlorn, along the shore,  
 Pensive reclines upon his useless oar :  
 See harnessed steeds desert the stony town,  
 And wander roads unstable, not their own,  
 Wheels o'er the hardened waters smoothly glide,  
 And raze with whitened tracks the slippery tide ;  
 Here the fat cook piles high the blazing fire,  
 And scarce the spit can turn the steer entire ;  
 Booths sudden hide the Thames, long streets appear,  
 And numerous games proclaim the crowded fair.  
 So, when a general bids the martial train  
 Spread their encampment o'er the spacious plain,  
 Thick-rising tents a canvas city build,  
 And the loud dice resound through all the field.

## BLACK-EYED SUSAN

All in the Downs the fleet was moor'd,  
 The streamers waving in the wind,  
 When black-eyed Susan came aboard :  
 'Oh ! where shall I my true-love find ?  
 Tell me, ye jovial sailors, tell me true,  
 If my sweet William sails among the crew.'

William, who high upon the yard  
 Rock'd with the billow to and fro,  
 Soon as her well-known voice he heard  
 He sigh'd, and cast his eyes below :  
 The cord slides swiftly through his glowing hands,  
 And, quick as lightning, on the deck he stands.



So the sweet lark, high poised in air,  
 Shuts close his pinions to his breast,  
 If chance his mate's shrill call he hear,  
 And drops at once into her nest.  
 The noblest captain in the British fleet  
 Might envy William's lips those kisses sweet.

' O Susan, Susan, lovely dear,  
 My vows shall ever true remain ;  
 Let me kiss off that falling tear ;  
 We only part to meet again.  
 Change as ye list, ye winds ! my heart shall be  
 The faithful compass that still points to thee.

' Believe not what the landsmen say,  
 Who tempt with doubts thy constant mind ;  
 They'll tell thee, sailors, when away,  
 In every port a mistress find :  
 Yes, yes, believe them when they tell thee so,  
 For thou art present wheresoe'er I go.

' If to fair India's coast we sail,  
 Thy eyes are seen in diamonds bright,  
 Thy breath is Afric's spicy gale,  
 Thy skin is ivory so white.  
 Thus every beauteous object that I view  
 Wakes in my soul some charm of lovely Sue.

' Though battle call me from thy arms,  
 Let not my pretty Susan mourn ;  
 Though cannons roar, yet, safe from harms,  
 William shall to his dear return.  
 Love turns aside the balls that round me fly,  
 Lest precious tears should drop from Susan's eye.'

The boatswain gave the dreadful word ;  
 The sails their swelling bosom spread ;  
 No longer must she stay aboard ;  
 They kiss'd—she sigh'd—he hung his head.  
 Her lessening boat unwilling rows to land ;  
 ' Adieu ! ' she cries, and waved her lily hand.



## WILLIAM COWPER

1731-1800

'I know how ill my harp, of artless string,  
 Can celebrate a name so dear as thine,  
 Or offer tribute at thy memory's shrine,  
 Which aught of added fame might hope to bring  
 Unto thy muse : but thoughts that fondly cling  
 To hours thy page has brighten'd, would entwine  
 For thee one simple, votive wreath of mine,  
 Which round thy urn with fearful hand I fling.  
 The just memorial of thy genuine worth,  
 Genius and feelings like thy own must claim,  
 And where can these be found ? yet, while the flame  
 Which sanctifies the altar, and home's hearth,  
 Shall warm and cheer thy " native nook of earth,"  
 England with gratitude shall bless thy name.'

BERNARD BARTON.

THE name of William Cowper is one of the greatest in the annals of English poesy. His many biographers are unanimous in his praise. 'To Cowper belongs pre-eminently,' says Willmott, 'above any writer in our language, the title of the Poet of the Affections. Campbell compares *The Task* to a playful little fountain which gathers magnitude and beauty as it proceeds. Cowper found the fountain in his heart. He has brought the Muse, in her most attractive form, to sit down by our hearths, and has breathed a sanctity over the daily economy of our existence. He builds up no magic castles ; he conducts us into no enchanted gardens ; no silver lutes sigh through his verse ; no wings of faëry glisten over his page. Instead of wandering over the shores of old romance, he teaches us out of the Book of Life, and invests with a delightful charm the commonest offices of humanity. He pauses with no delight upon the variegated fancy of Davenant, the serious sweetness of Spenser, or the resplendent visions of Milton ; and he joyfully exchanges the beautiful pomp of the Attic mythology for the dearer recollections of his native village ; for the garden gate over which he has often hung ; the humming of the bees ; and the piping of the robin in his own apple-tree.'

William Cowper was born at Great Berkhamstead, in Hertfordshire, on the 15th of November, 1731. His father was the Rev. John Cowper, D.D., Rector of the parish. Dr. Cowper was a son of Spenser Cowper, who was one of the judges of the



Court of Common Pleas, and a younger brother to the first Earl Cowper, Lord High Chancellor of England. The poet's mother was of noble lineage, being connected with some of the most exalted families in the kingdom.

The story of the poet's life is a particularly sad one. He was bullied unmercifully at his first school, from which he was removed to Westminster. From this school, at which he remained until he was eighteen years of age, he entered a solicitor's office as apprentice, and remained there for three years. He did not study much law during this period, however, but devoted his time to the pursuit of classical and general literature, and enjoying the social intercourse afforded by a number of congenial spirits whom he refers to as the 'Nonsense Club.' He read Pope's translation of the *Iliad* with great perseverance, comparing it closely with the original, and studied French and Italian authors of eminence. He also contributed occasionally to various journals, notably to the *Connoisseur*, which was edited by his friend Colman. After his apprenticeship, he went into chambers at the Temple, but began very soon to suffer from fits of depression, which for awhile made his life a burden to him, and ultimately resulted in insanity. He was destined never to practise his profession. His influence at headquarters obtained for him the well-paid office of Clerk of the Journals in the House of Lords, but his terror at the thought of appearing in public led him to make an attempt at self-destruction. He was removed to an asylum, from which he was discharged after a short time, but now quite unfitted for any professional or official employment. Being possessed of some private means, he became an inmate in the home of a clergyman named Unwin, in Huntingdon. On the death of that gentleman, he went with the widow to Olney in 1767, where he made the acquaintance of John Newton, a strong Calvinist, who exerted a considerable influence over the life and thought of the poet. It is thought that his friendship was injurious to Cowper, in his already too morbid state of mind. 'By perpetually dwelling,' says Mr. Shaw, 'upon mysterious and gloomy religious questions, and by encouraging the fatal habit of analyzing his own internal sensations, the poet's tendency to enthusiasm was aggravated; and though it could not diminish the charm of his genius or the benevolence of his heart, this religious fanaticism entirely destroyed the happiness of his life.'



In 1773 and the two following years he suffered a relapse of his malady, on recovering from which he endeavoured to calm his shattered spirits with a variety of innocent amusements, gardening, carpentering, and taming hares.' He left Olney in 1786, and became unsettled in his movements, changing his residence constantly within the next ten years. Mrs. Unwin died in 1796, a bereavement which intensified the sadness of the poet's remaining years. He died on the 25th of April, 1800, and was buried in the parish church of East Dereham. His monument, by Flaxman, was erected to his memory by Lady Hesketh, and bears the following affectionate and appropriate tribute from the pen of his biographer, Hayley :

'Ye, who with warmth the public triumph feel,  
Of talents, dignified, with sacred zeal,  
Here to devotion's bard devoutly just,  
Pay your fond tribute due to Cowper's dust !  
England, exulting in his spotless fame,  
Ranks with her dearest sons his fav'rite name :  
Sense, fancy, wit, suffice not all to raise  
So clear a title to affection's praise ;  
His highest honours to the heart belong ;  
His virtues formed the magic of his song.'

Cowper wrote at first as a pastime, but the flowers of his genius were so well received by the reading public that he was led to pursue the practice as a profession. He was already fifty-one years of age when, in 1782, he published his first poems, *The Progress of Error*, *Table Talk*, and *Conversation*. These met with but slight success. His great poem, *The Task*, was written at the suggestion of his accomplished friend Lady Austen, and appeared in 1785. It is written in blank verse. As soon as he had completed the second volume of this masterpiece, he began a translation of Homer, being dissatisfied with the translation of Pope. The 40,000 lines were completed, and the work published by subscription, in 1791.

Cowper's shorter poems are so well known as to need but a passing word. Nothing could excel the pathos and sweetness of his perennial lines on receiving his mother's picture. To many readers he is best known as the author of *John Gilpin*, a poem which teems throughout with inimitable drollery. His *Olney Hymns* are exquisite. His poems relating to our furred and feathered friends have entitled him to be called the Laureate of the Animal World.



The poem of *John Gilpin* is a proof that this man of gloom had his merry moods. The story was related to him by Lady Austen, who had heard it as a child. It is said to have caused the poet a sleepless night, as he was kept awake by laughter at it. During his hours of restlessness he composed the well-known ballad, and sent it anonymously to the *Public Advertiser* on the 14th of November, 1782. A popular actor named Henderson recited it at the Freemasons' Hall, and it leaped into popular favour, achieving a place in the affection of the English people which it has retained to the present day. The original of John Gilpin is supposed to have been a Mr. Beyer, a linen-draper who lived at the Cheapside corner of Paternoster Row, and died, at the age of ninety-nine, in 1791.

Of a character far different is this great poet's masterpiece, *The Task*. It has already been stated that we have to thank Lady Austen for the suggestion. She pressed Cowper to write a poem in blank verse. He said he would if she would suggest a subject. 'Oh,' said the lady, 'you can write on anything. Write on this sofa.' And accordingly 'The Sofa' forms the subject of the first book of the great poem. It established the reputation of its author at once. His biographer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* says of this work :

'He who desires to put into the hands of a youth a poem which, though not destitute of poetical embellishment, is yet free from all matter of a licentious tendency, will find in *The Task* a book adapted to his purpose. It would be absurd and extravagant austerity to condemn those poetical productions in which love constitutes the leading feature. That passion has in every age been the concernment of life, the theme of the poet, and the plot of the stage. Yet there is a kind of amorous sensibility, bordering on morbid enthusiasm, which the youthful mind too often imbibes from the glowing sentiments of the poets. Their genius describes in the most splendid colours the operations of a passion which requires rebuke rather than incentive, and lends to the most grovelling sensuality the enchantments of a rich and creative imagination. But in *The Task* of Cowper there is no licentiousness of description. All is grave, moral, and majestic. A vein of sober thinking pervades every page, and the insufficiency and variety of human pursuits are described in finished poetry.'



## FROM 'THE TASK,' BOOK III.

## I WAS A STRICKEN DEER

I was a stricken deer that left the herd  
 Long since ; with many an arrow deep infix'd  
 My panting side was charg'd, when I withdrew  
 To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.  
 There was I found by One who had Himself  
 Been hurt by the archers. In His side He bore  
 And in His hands and feet, the cruel scars.  
 With gentle force soliciting the darts,  
 He drew them forth, and heal'd and bade me live.  
 Since then, with few associates, in remote  
 And silent woods I wander, far from those  
 My former partners of the peopled scene ;  
 With few associates, and not wishing more.  
 Here much I ruminate, as much I may,  
 With other views of men and manners now  
 Than once, and others of a life to come.  
 I see that all are wanderers, gone astray  
 Each in his own delusions ; they are lost  
 In chase of fancied happiness, still woo'd  
 And never won. Dream after dream ensues,  
 And still they dream that they shall still succeed,  
 And still are disappointed. Rings the world  
 With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind,  
 And add two-thirds of the remaining half,  
 And find the total of their hopes and fears  
 Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay  
 As if created only like the fly,  
 That spreads his motley wings in the eye of noon,  
 To sport their season, and be seen no more.  
 The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,  
 And pregnant with discoveries new and rare.

## FROM 'THE TASK,' BOOK IV.

## THE COUNTRY POSTMAN

Hark ! 'tis the twanging horn ! O'er yonder bridge,  
 That with its wearisome but needful length  
 Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon  
 Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright,  
 He comes, the herald of a noisy world,  
 With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist and frozen locks,  
 News from all nations lumbering at his back.  
 True to his charge the close-pack'd load behind,  
 Yet careless what he brings, his one concern  
 Is to conduct it to the destined inn,  
 And having dropped the expected bag—pass on.  
 He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,  
 Cold and yet cheerful : messenger of grief  
 Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some ;  
 To him indifferent whether grief or joy.  
 Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,  
 Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet  
 With tears that trickled down the writer's cheeks  
 Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,



Or charged with amorous sighs of absent swains,  
 Or nymphs responsive, equally affect  
 His horse and him, unconscious of them all.  
 But oh the important budget ! usher'd in  
 With such heart-shaking music, who can say  
 What are its tidings ! have our troops awaked ?  
 Or do they still, as if with opium drugg'd,  
 Snore to the murmurs of the Atlantic wave ?<sup>1</sup>  
 Is India free ? and does she wear her plumed  
 And jewell'd turban with a smile of peace,  
 Or do we grind her still ? The grand debate,  
 The popular harangue, the tart reply,  
 The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,  
 And the loud laugh—I long to know them all ;  
 I burn to set the imprison'd wranglers free,  
 And give them voice and utterance once again.  
 Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,  
 Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,  
 And while the bubbling and loud hissing urn  
 Throws up a steamy column, and the cups  
 That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,  
 So let us welcome peaceful evening in.

## THE CHAFFINCH'S NEST

A TALE,<sup>2</sup> FOUNDED ON FACT

(June, 1793)

In Scotland's realm, where trees are few,  
 Nor even shrubs abound ;  
 But where, however bleak the view,  
 Some better things are found ;

For husband there and wife may boast  
 Their union undefiled,  
 And false ones are as rare almost  
 As hedgerows in the wild ;

In Scotland's realm forlorn and bare  
 The history chanced of late—  
 The history of a wedded pair,  
 A chaffinch and his mate.

The spring drew near, each felt a breast  
 With genial instinct fill'd ;  
 They pair'd, and would have built a nest,  
 But found not where to build.

<sup>1</sup> The American War was then taking place.

<sup>2</sup> This tale is founded on an article which appeared in the *Buckinghamshire Herald*, Saturday, the 1st of June, 1792 : 'Glasgow, May 23.—In a block, or pulley, near the head of the mast of a gabbert, now lying at the Broomielaw, there is a chaffinch's nest and four eggs. The nest was built while the vessel lay at Greenock, and was followed hither by both birds. Though the block is occasionally lowered for the inspection of the curious, the birds have not forsaken the nest. The cock, however, visits the nest but seldom, while the hen never leaves it but when she descends to the hull for food.'



The heaths uncover'd and the moors  
 Except with snow and sleet,  
 Sea-beaten rocks and naked shores  
 Could yield them no retreat.

Long time a breeding place they sought,  
 Till both grew vexed and tired ;  
 At length a ship arriving brought  
 The good so long desired.

A ship ?—could such a restless thing  
 Afford them place of rest ?  
 Or was the merchant charged to bring  
 The homeless birds a nest ?

Hush !—silent hearers profit most—  
 This racer of the sea  
 Proved kinder to them than the coast,  
 It served them with a tree.

But such a tree ! 'twas shaven deal,  
 The tree they call a mast,  
 And had a hollow with a wheel  
 Through which the tackle pass'd.

Within that cavity aloft  
 Their roofless home they fixed,  
 Formed with materials neat and soft,  
 Bents, wool, and feathers mixed.

Four ivory eggs soon pave its floor,  
 With russet specks bedight ;  
 The vessel weighs, forsakes the shore,  
 And lessens to the sight.

The mother-bird is gone to sea,  
 As she had changed her kind :  
 But goes the male ? Far wiser, he  
 Is doubtless left behind.

No—soon as from ashore he saw  
 The winged mansion move,  
 He flew to reach it, by a law  
 Of never-failing love ;

Then perching at his consort's side,  
 Was briskly borne along,  
 The billows and the blast defied,  
 And cheer'd her with a song.

The seaman with sincere delight  
 His feather'd shipmates eyes,  
 Scarce less exulting in the sight  
 Than when he tows a prize.

For seamen much believe in signs,  
 And from a chance so new  
 Each some approaching good divines,  
 And may his hopes be true !



Hail, honour'd land ! a desert where  
 Not even birds can hide,  
 Yet parent of this loving pair  
 Whom nothing could divide.

And ye who, rather than resign  
 Your matrimonial plan,  
 Were not afraid to plough the brine  
 In company with man ;

For whose lean country much disdain  
 We English often show ;  
 Yet from a richer nothing gain  
 But wantonness and woe ;

Be it your fortune, year by year,  
 The same resource to prove,  
 And may ye sometimes landing here,  
 Instruct us how to love !

#### ON THE LOSS OF 'THE ROYAL GEORGE'

WRITTEN WHEN THE NEWS ARRIVED<sup>1</sup>

(*To the march in Scipio*)

Toll for the brave !  
 The brave that are no more !  
 All sunk beneath the wave,  
 Fast by their native shore !

Eight hundred of the brave,  
 Whose courage well was tried,  
 Had made the vessel heel,  
 And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,  
 And she was overset ;  
 Down went the *Royal George*,  
 With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave !  
 Brave Kempenfelt is gone.  
 His last sea-fight is fought ;  
 His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle ;  
 No tempest gave the shock ;  
 She sprang no fatal leak ;  
 She ran upon no rock.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Royal George*, 108 guns, was lost off Spithead on August 29, 1782. She was undergoing some repairs, and was careened over, when a sudden gust of wind overset her, and she sank. A great number of persons were on board at the time, from Portsmouth. Two or three hundred bodies floated on shore, and were buried in Kingston Churchyard.



## A HISTORY OF BRITISH POETRY

His sword was in its sheath ;  
 His fingers held the pen,  
 When Kempenfelt went down  
 With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,  
 Once dreaded by our foes !  
 And mingle with our cup  
 The tear that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,  
 And she may float again,  
 Full charged with England's thunder,  
 And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,  
 His victories are o'er ;  
 And he and his eight hundred  
 Shall plough the waves no more.

## THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT

Forced from home and all its pleasures,  
 Afric's coast I left forlorn ;  
 To increase a stranger's treasures,  
 O'er the raging billows borne.  
 Men from England bought and sold me,  
 Paid my price in paltry gold ;  
 But, though slave they have enroll'd me,  
 Minds are never to be sold.

Still in thought as free as ever,  
 What are England's rights, I ask,  
 Me from my delights to sever,  
 Me to torture, me to task ?  
 Fleecy locks and black complexion  
 Cannot forfeit Nature's claim ;  
 Skins may differ, but affection  
 Dwells in white and black the same.

Why did all-creating Nature  
 Make the plant for which we toil ?  
 Sighs must fan it, tears must water,  
 Sweat of ours must dress the soil.  
 Think, ye masters, iron-hearted,  
 Lolling at your jovial boards,  
 Think how many backs have smarted  
 For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,  
 Is there One who reigns on high ?  
 Has He bid you buy and sell us,  
 Speaking from His throne, the sky ?  
 Ask Him, if your knotted scourges,  
 Matches, blood-extorting screws,  
 Are the means that duty urges  
 Agents of His will to use ?



Hark ! He answers !—wild tornadoes  
 Strewing yonder sea with wrecks,  
 Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,  
 Are the voice with which He speaks.  
 He, foreseeing what vexations  
 Afric's sons should undergo,  
 Fix'd their tyrant's habitations  
 Where His whirlwinds answer—No !

By our blood in Afric wasted,  
 Ere our necks received the chain ;  
 By the miseries that we tasted,  
 Crossing in your barks the main ;  
 By our sufferings, since ye brought us  
 To the man-degrading mart,  
 All sustain'd by patience, taught us  
 Only by a broken heart !

Deem our nation brutes no longer,  
 Till some reason ye shall find  
 Worthier of regard and stronger  
 Than the colour of our kind.  
 Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealing:  
 Tarnish all your boasted powers,  
 Prove that you have human feelings  
 Ere you proudly question ours !

#### TO THE NIGHTINGALE

WHICH THE AUTHOR HEARD SING ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

Whence is it, that amazed I hear,  
 From yonder wither'd spray,  
 This foremost morn of all the year,  
 The melody of May ?

And why, since thousands would be proud  
 Of such a favour shown,  
 Am I selected from the crowd,  
 To witness it alone ?

Sing'st thou, sweet Philomel, to me,  
 For that I also long  
 Have practised in the groves like thee,  
 Though not like thee in song ?

Or sing'st thou rather under force  
 Of some divine command,  
 Commission'd to presage a course  
 Of happier days at hand ?

Thrice welcome then ! for many a long  
 And joyless year have I,  
 As thou to-day, put forth my song,  
 Beneath a wintry sky.

But thee no wintry skies can harm,  
 Who only need'st to sing  
 To make even January charm,  
 And every season Spring.



## THE RAVEN

(1780)

A raven, while with glossy breast  
 Her new-laid eggs she fondly press'd,  
 And, on her wicker-work high mounted,  
 Her chickens prematurely counted,  
 (A fault philosophers might blame,  
 If quite exempted from the same,)  
 Enjoy'd at ease the genial day ;  
 'Twas April, as the bumpkins say,  
 The legislature call'd it May.<sup>1</sup>  
 But suddenly a wind, as high  
 As ever swept a wintry sky,  
 Shook the young leaves about her ears,  
 And fill'd her with a thousand fears,  
 Lest the rude blast should snap the bough,  
 And spread her golden hopes below.  
 But just at eve the blowing weather  
 And all her fears were hush'd together ;  
 'And now,' quoth poor unthinking Ralph,  
 "'Tis over, and the brood is safe' ;  
 (For ravens, though, as birds of omen,  
 They teach both conjurers and old women  
 To tell us what is to befall,  
 Can't prophesy themselves at all.)  
 The morning came, when neighbour Hodge,  
 Who long had mark'd her airy lodge,  
 And destined all the treasure there  
 A gift to his expecting fair,  
 Climb'd like a squirrel to his dray,  
 And bore the worthless prize away.

## MORAL

'Tis Providence alone secures  
 In every change both mine and yours :  
 Safety consists not in escape  
 From dangers of a frightful shape ;  
 An earthquake may be bid to spare  
 The man that's strangled by a hair.  
 Fate steals along with silent tread,  
 Found oftenest in what least we dread,  
 Frowns in the storm with angry brow,  
 But in the sunshine strikes the blow.

## FROM 'THE OLNEY HYMNS'

## OH ! FOR A CLOSER WALK WITH GOD

Oh ! for a closer walk with God,  
 A calm and heavenly frame ;  
 A light to shine upon the road  
 That leads me to the Lamb !

<sup>1</sup> Alluding to the change of style, by which, in 1752, eleven days were deducted from the year. It was long before the peasantry would accept the advanced dates.



Where is the blessedness I knew  
 When first I saw the Lord ?  
 Where is the soul-refreshing view  
 Of Jesus and His word ?

What peaceful hours I once enjoyed !  
 How sweet their memory still !  
 But they have left an aching void,  
 The world can never fill.

Return, O holy Dove, return !  
 Sweet messenger of rest !  
 I hate the sins that made Thee mourn,  
 And drove Thee from my breast.

The dearest idol I have known,  
 Whate'er that idol be,  
 Help me to tear it from Thy throne,  
 And worship only Thee.

So shall my walk be close with God,  
 Calm and serene my frame ;  
 So purer light shall mark the road  
 That leads me to the Lamb.

#### HARK, MY SOUL ! IT IS THE LORD

Hark, my soul ! it is the Lord ;  
 'Tis thy Saviour, hear His word ;  
 Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee,  
 Say, poor sinner, lovest thou Me ?

' I deliver'd thee when bound,  
 And when bleeding, heal'd thy wound ;  
 Sought thee wandering, set thee right,  
 Turn'd thy darkness into light.

' Can a woman's tender care  
 Cease towards the child she bare ?  
 Yes, she may forgetful be,  
 Yet will I remember thee.

' Mine is an unchanging love,  
 Higher than the heights above,  
 Deeper than the depths beneath,  
 Free and faithful, strong as death.

' Thou shalt see My glory soon,  
 When the work of grace is done ;  
 Partner of My throne shalt be ;—  
 Say, poor sinner, lovest thou Me ?

Lord, it is my chief complaint,  
 That my love is weak and faint ;  
 Yet I love Thee and adore,—  
 Oh ! for grace to love Thee more !



## GOD MOVES IN A MYSTERIOUS WAY

God moves in a mysterious way  
 His wonders to perform ;  
 He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
 And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines  
 Of never-failing skill,  
 He treasures up His bright designs,  
 And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,  
 The clouds ye so much dread  
 Are big with mercy, and shall break  
 In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
 But trust Him for His grace :  
 Behind a frowning providence  
 He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,  
 Unfolding every hour ;  
 The bud may have a bitter taste,  
 But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
 And scan His work in vain :  
 God is His own interpreter,  
 And He will make it plain.

## REV. GEORGE CRABBE

1754-1832

‘THE title self-taught, often unmeaningly applied to poets, or aspirants after poetry, slightly tintured with learning, but servile followers of the few models to which they have access, is perfectly appropriate to the subject of the present article, as being one of the most truly original writers in the range of our popular literature.’ Thus the writer of his memoir in Dr. Aikin’s *Select Works of the British Poets*. George Crabbe was born at the obscure fishing village of Aldborough, in Suffolk. His father, a man of rough manners and robust intellect, was at one time a parish clerk and schoolmaster, and afterwards a collector of duties on salt, or saltmaster, in the said village. ‘In a mean cottage, on a squalid shore,’ the future poet passed his years of childhood,



'cradled amongst the rough sons of the ocean—a daily witness of unbridled passions, and of manners remote from the sameness and artificial smoothness of polished society.' His parents soon noticed the extraordinary abilities which he possessed, and his ardent passion for the acquisition of knowledge. Books were his constant companions, and he devoured the contents of all that came within his reach. Fiction, fairy-tales, and poetry had a special charm for him, but besides this he began early to be a close student of human nature, and of such beauties of natural scenery and history as the neighbourhood of his home afforded. He was placed, at the age of fourteen, under the care of a surgeon near Bury St. Edmunds, and remained in his service for three years. Removing to Woodbridge, he completed his apprenticeship under another member of the profession. During this early period of his career he wrote poetry with great persistence. He contributed a poem on *Hope* to the *Lady's Magazine*, and published another anonymously on the subject of *Inebriety*. In 1775 he returned to his native place, and for awhile assisted his father in his calling. After this he went to London with a view to finishing his medical course, but for want of means he was obliged to come home again. He attempted to build up a practice for himself as a surgeon and apothecary, but with small measure of success. To make matters more gloomy, he formed an attachment to a young woman named Sarah Elmy, who, to quote the words of the poet's son, 'was too prudent to marry when there seemed to be no chance of a competent livelihood; and he, instead of being in a position to maintain a family, could hardly, by labour which he abhorred, earn daily bread for himself.' Yet she was true to him through many vicissitudes, and in twelve years became his wife.

Crabbe now started upon the precarious course of a literary adventurer. He borrowed £5 from his friend, Mr. Dudley North, paid his debts, and took his ticket for London on a small sloop sailing from Aldborough. He arrived in the Metropolis in April, 1780, with a box of clothes, a case of surgical instruments, and £3 in his pocket. Then began a period of deep want and humiliation. Publishers refused him coldly, and the great refused to patronize him. At length a generous benefactor held out a helping hand. Very touching is the diary which he kept throughout this dark period, addressed to Mira, his



betrothed. In the depth of his misery, he wrote to Edmund Burke, and walked Westminster Bridge backwards and forwards until daylight the night after he despatched the letter. Burke responded with sympathy, examined his writings, and housed him at Beaconsfield. He introduced him to Fox and Reynolds.

Burke took charge of two poems, *The Library* and *The Village*, improved them a little, and took them to Dodsley, the publisher. The former was published in 1781 and the latter in 1783. They created a favourable impression on the public mind. Lord Thurlow, who had left a letter from Crabbe unanswered, invited him to breakfast, and sent him away the richer by a hundred pounds.

Crabbe now followed the bent of his inclination by taking Holy Orders, and returned as curate to his native village, but soon relinquished that position, which he did not altogether enjoy, for the chaplaincy of Belvoir, the residence of the Duke of Rutland. Neither was this post quite to the poet's taste, though he held with it a living in Dorsetshire, offered him by Lord Thurlow. It was at this juncture that the lady of his choice consented to become his wife. The Duke went to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant, but granted comfortable apartments at Belvoir Castle to his chaplain during his absence. The Duke died in Dublin in 1787, and Lord Thurlow added to his former favours by conferring upon Crabbe the Rectory of Muston, in Leicestershire. Up to this time he had only published one poem, *The Newspaper*, in addition to those already mentioned, and now, for twenty-two years, he did not publish anything. During this lengthy period he was completing his education, and writing many works of various kinds, some of which were destined to appear in print and some to be committed to the flames. In 1807 he charmed the reading public by the issue of the *Parish Register*, which Charles Fox had revised just before his death. In 1810 *The Borough* followed. It is 'unrivalled for the stern fidelity of its interesting characters and the graphic truth of its touching illustrations.' In 1812 appeared his *Tales in Verse*, which, his son tells us, 'had the advantage of ampler scope and development than his preceding works.'

It was at this stage in his eventful career that his wife died. He was greatly afflicted by the loss which he thus sustained. Years afterwards, on visiting the scenes of his youth, he



wrote the following lines, which were not found until after his death :

Yes, I behold again the place,  
The seat of joy, the source of pain ;  
It brings in view the form and face  
That I must never see again.

The night-bird's song that sweetly floats  
On this soft gloom—this balmy air,  
Brings to the mind her sweeter notes  
That I again must never hear.

Lo ! yonder shines that window's light,  
My guide, my token heretofore ;  
And now again it shines so bright  
When those dear eyes can shine no more.

Then hurry from this place away !  
It gives not now the bliss it gave ;  
For Death has made its charm his prey,  
And joy is buried in her grave.

Soon after his wife's death Crabbe was fortunately blessed with a change of scene. The Duke of Rutland, son of his former patron, presented him to the valuable living of Trowbridge, where he spent the remaining eighteen years of his life. The last of his works, published in 1819, was entitled *Tales of the Hall*, and for it and the remaining copyright of all his previous poems he received from John Murray the splendid remuneration of £3,000. On the 3rd of February, 1832, he died, his final utterance being, 'All is well at last.'

#### AUTUMNAL SKETCH

It was a fair and mild autumnal sky,  
And earth's ripe treasures met the admiring eye.  
As a rich beauty, when her bloom is lost,  
Appears with more magnificence and cost :  
The wet and heavy grass, where feet had stray'd,  
Not yet erect, the wanderer's way betray'd ;  
Showers of the night had swelled the deepening rill,  
The morning breeze had urged the quickening mill ;  
Assembled rooks had wing'd their seaward flight,  
By the same passage to return at night,  
While proudly o'er them hung the steady kite,  
Then turn'd them back, and left the noisy throng,  
Nor deign'd to know them as he sail'd along.  
Long yellow leaves, from osiers, strew'd around,  
Choked the dull stream, and hush'd its feeble sound,  
While the dead foliage dropt from loftier trees,  
Our squire beheld not with his wonted ease ;  
But to his own reflections made reply,  
And said aloud, 'Yes ; doubtless we must die.'



'We must,' said Richard; 'and we would not live  
 To feel what dotage and decay will give;  
 But we yet taste whatever we behold;  
 The morn is lovely, though the air is cold:  
 There is delicious quiet in this scene,  
 At once so rich, so varied, so serene;  
 Sounds, too, delight us—each discordant tone  
 Thus mingled, please, that fail to please alone;  
 This hollow wind, this rustling of the brook,  
 The farm-yard noise, the woodman at yon oak—  
 See, the axe falls!—now listen to the stroke!  
 That gun itself, that murders all this peace,  
 Adds to the charm, because it soon must cease.'

### THE LIBRARY

When the sad soul, by care and grief oppress'd,  
 Looks round the world, but looks in vain for rest—  
 When every object that appears in view  
 Partakes her gloom, and seems dejected too;  
 Where shall affliction from itself retire?  
 Where fade away, and placidly expire?  
 Alas! we fly to silent scenes in vain,  
 Care blasts the honours of the flowery plain;  
 Care veils in clouds the sun's meridian beam,  
 Sighs through the grove and murmurs in the stream;  
 For when the soul is labouring in despair,  
 In vain the body breathes a purer air:  
 No storm-toss'd sailor sighs for slumbering seas,  
 He dreads the tempest, but invokes the breeze;  
 On the smooth mirror of the deep resides  
 Reflected woe, and o'er unruffled tides  
 The ghost of every former danger glides.  
 Thus in the calm of life we only see  
 A steadier image of our misery;  
 But lively gales, and gently clouded skies,  
 Disperse the sad reflections as they rise;  
 And busy thoughts and little cares avail  
 To ease the mind, when rest and reason fail.  
 When the dull thought, by no designs employ'd,  
 Dwells on the past, or suffer'd or enjoy'd,  
 We bleed anew in every former grief,  
 And joys departed furnish no relief.  
 Not Hope itself, with all her flattering art,  
 Can cure this stubborn sickness of the heart;  
 The soul disdains each comfort she prepares,  
 And anxious searches for congenial cares:  
 Those lenient cares which, with our own combin'd,  
 By mix'd sensations ease the afflicted mind,  
 And steal our grief away, and leave their own behind;  
 A lighter grief! which feeling hearts endure  
 Without regret, nor even demand a cure.

But what strange art, what magic can dispose  
 The troubled mind to change its native woes?  
 Or lead us willing from ourselves, to see  
 Others more wretched, more undone than we?  
 This books can do;—nor this alone; they give  
 New views of life, and teach us how to live;



They soothe the grieved, the stubborn they chastise ;  
 Fools they admonish, and confirm the wise ;  
 Their aid they yield to all ; they never shun  
 The man of sorrow, nor the wretch undone :  
 Unlike the hard, the selfish, and the proud,  
 They fly not sullen from the suppliant crowd ;  
 Nor tell to various people various things,  
 But show to subjects what they show to Kings.

## CHARITY

An ardent spirit dwells with Christian love,  
 The eagle's vigour in the pitying dove ;  
 'Tis not enough that we with sorrow sigh,  
 That we the wants of pleading man supply,  
 That we in sympathy with sufferers feel,  
 Nor hear a grief without a wish to heal :  
 Not these suffice—to sickness, pain, and woe,  
 The Christian spirit loves with aid to go ;  
 Will not be sought, waits not for Want to plead,  
 But seeks the duty—nay, prevents the need ;  
 Her utmost aid to every ill applies,  
 And plants relief for coming miseries.

## ANNA LETITIA BARBAULD

1743-1825

‘ KNOWN to the literary world as one of the most classical, elegant, and useful writers of her time,’ Anna Letitia Barbauld was born on the 20th of June, 1743, at Kibworth Harcourt in Leicestershire. She was the eldest child of John Aikin, a dissenting minister, who conducted a private school in that place. Her early love for learning is thus described by her mother :

‘ I once knew a little girl who was as eager to learn as her instructors could be to teach her ; and who, at two years old, could read sentences and little stories in her wise book, roundly, without spelling, and in half a year more could read as well as most women.’ This might be difficult to believe were it not for the fact that the mother herself was the instructor from the first ; the father, a man of considerable attainments, superintending her studies in the higher branches of learning in after-years. She married the Rev. Rochemont Barbauld, who became the minister of a chapel at Palgrave, near Diss, in Suffolk, and afterwards removed to a charge at Newington. Her chief efforts



in verse are contained in a volume entitled *Miscellaneous Poems*, which appeared in 1773, a year before her marriage. She died at Stoke Newington in 1825, in her eighty-second year. A collection of her works was published after her death by her brother's family. The hymns of Mrs. Barbauld are deservedly popular, and her talents have been thus described by her niece, Lucy Aiken, who has written the story of her life :

'The classical elegance and correctness, the brilliancy and play of fancy, the elevation of sentiment, the love of freedom, and the high devotional spirit which breathe through the strains of this accomplished poet, give a true picture of her mind and manners. She was alike free from vanity, from pride, and from envy ; candid, mild, and courteous ; she won general esteem ; and such was her constancy and fidelity that she was never known to alienate a friend or drop a friendship.' Her beautiful poem on *The Death of the Righteous* is counted amongst the gems of English sacred poetry, and has been thought supremely applicable to her own calm passage to 'the grave and gate of death.'

Sweet is the scene when virtue dies !  
When sinks a righteous soul to rest,  
How mildly beam the closing eyes,  
How gently heaves th' expiring breast.

So fades a summer cloud away ;  
So sinks the gale when storms are o'er ;  
So gently shuts the eye of day ;  
So dies the wave along the shore.

Triumphant smiles the victor brow,  
Fanned by some angel's purple wing ;  
Where is, O Grave ! thy victory now ;  
And where, insidious Death, thy sting ?

The following stanza from a poem entitled *Life* was much admired by Wordsworth :

Life ! we've been long together,  
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather ;  
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear ;  
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear ;  
Then steal away, give little warning,  
Choose thine own time,  
Say not ' Good-night,' but in some brighter clime  
Bid me ' Good-morning.'



## SCOTTISH POETS

## ALLAN RAMSAY

1686-1758

' Here, 'midst those scenes that taught thy Doric muse  
 Her sweetest song—the hills, the woods, the streams,  
 Where beauteous Peggy stray'd, listening the while  
 Her "Gentle Shepherd's" tender tale of love—  
 Scenes which thy pencil, true to nature, gave  
 To live for ever—sacred be this shrine,  
 And unprofaned by ruder hands, the stone,  
 That owes its honours to thy deathless name.'

FRAZER TYTLER.

ALLAN RAMSAY, one of the greatest of Scottish poets, was the son of a workman in the lead-mines of Lord Hopetoun, who lived in homely fashion on the high mountains that divide Annandale from Clydesdale, in Lanarkshire. In a lonely cottage, whose ruins are still the scene of many a pilgrimage, the subject of this memoir was born on the 15th of October, 1686. Allan was employed in childhood in assisting to wash the ore. He was sent to the parish school, in which institution he was made acquainted with little, if anything, beyond 'the three R's.' He also acted in the capacity of a shepherd until he was fifteen years of age, an occupation which doubtless laid the foundation of that accurate knowledge of rural life which characterizes his celebrated work, *The Gentle Shepherd*. While he was yet a boy his father died, and his mother became the wife of a small farmer in Lanarkshire. As might be expected, Allan's stepfather was anxious to get rid of him as soon as possible, and he was accordingly bound apprentice to a hairdresser in Edinburgh. He applied himself with creditable diligence to his humble duties, and in time was able to start in the business on his own account.

There seems to be some doubt as to whether this celebrated man combined shaving with wig-making. But it is argued that shaving and wig-making certainly were always united in Scotland, and there is no ground for supposing that the poet was an exception to the general rule. It is greatly to the credit of Ramsay that he was not in the least ashamed of his calling, but he had, nevertheless, ambitions beyond its range. He strove to satisfy this by devoting his leisure time to the careful perusal of such works as might prove helpful to him in his career as a poet. In



the year 1712 he married an Edinburgh lady named Christian Ross, the daughter of a writer to the signet. By her he had eight children, the eldest of whom was a son who rose to eminence as a portrait-painter, and was employed professionally by King George III. After his marriage Ramsay began to attract considerable attention by his poems, and gained an entry into the clubs and literary circles of Edinburgh. Added to this, his undoubted talents and pleasing personality had secured for him the friendship of many people of high rank and cultivated taste. He made a special study of the writings of Dryden, Pope, Gay, and Prior. In later years he abandoned his original calling, and set up a book-shop, in connection with which he established the first circulating library in Scotland.

Ramsay's religious views were not moulded on the stringent pattern of his fellow-countrymen in general. He resented the prevalent idea that the drama was dangerous to the piety and morals of the community. In the year 1736 he fitted up a theatre at his own expense, and thereby raised a storm about his head. In the following year the magistrates of Edinburgh, empowered by the Licensing Act, compelled him to shut it up, thereby almost ruining him financially. But he survived the reverse, built a villa on the Castle Hill, and lived out his days in domestic comfort and literary activity. The villa, from its peculiar shape, is known to the irreverent as the Goose-pie, and to the serious as 'Ramsay Garden.' The poet died at the age of seventy-two, on the 7th of January, 1758.

*The Gentle Shepherd* is a poem of great beauty, being a pastoral drama which will bear comparison with anything of its kind in any language. It describes in masterly fashion the glorious picturesqueness of the scenery of rural Scotland, and the manners and customs of its rustic people. The songs which are interspersed here and there throughout the poem are remarkable for their natural simplicity and rhythmical sweetness. The complete work was published in 1725.

#### RUSTIC COURTSHIP

Hear how I served my lass I lo'e as weel  
As ye do, Jenny, and wi' heart as leal.  
Last morning I was gye and early out,  
Upon a dike I leaned, glow'ring about ;  
I saw my Meg come linkin' o'er the lea ;  
I saw my Meg, but Meggy saw na me ;



For yet the sun was wading through the mist,  
 And she was close upon me ere she wist.  
 Her coats were kiltit, and did sweetly shaw  
 Her straight bare legs, that whiter were than snaw ;  
 Her cockernony snooded up fu' sleek,  
 Her haffet locks hang waving on her cheek ;  
 Her cheeks sae ruddy, and her een sae clear ;  
 And oh ! her mouth's like ony hinny pear.  
 Neat, neat she was, in bustine waistcoat clean,  
 As she same skipping o'er the dewy green.  
 Blithsome, I cried : ' My bonny Meg, come here,  
 I ferly wherefore ye're so soon asteer ;  
 But I can guess ; ye're gaun to gather dew.'  
 She scoured away, and said : ' What's that to you ?'  
 ' Then, fare ye well, Meg Dorts, and e'en's ye like,'  
 I careless cried, and lap in o'er the dike.  
 I trow, when that she saw, within a crack,  
 She came with a right thieveless errand back ;  
 Misca'd me first, then bade me hound my dog,  
 To wear up three waff ewes strayed on the bog.  
 I leugh ; and sae did she ; then wi' great haste  
 I clasped my arms about her neck and waist ;  
 About her yielding waist, and took a fouth  
 O' sweetest kisses frae her glowing mouth.  
 While hard and fast I held her in my grips,  
 My very soul came louping to my lips.  
 Sair, sair she flet wi' me 'tween ilka smack,  
 But weel I kend she meant nae as she spak.  
 Dear Roger, when your jo puts on her gloom,  
 Do ye sae too, and never fash your thumb.  
 Seem to forsake her, soon she'll change her mood ;  
 Gae woo anither, and she'll gang clean wud.

#### LOCHABER NO MORE

Farewell to Lochaber, and farewell my Jean,  
 Where heartsome with thee I've mony day been ;  
 For Lochaber no more, Lochaber no more,  
 We'll maybe return to Lochaber no more.  
 These tears that I shed, they are a' for my dear,  
 And no for the dangers attending on weir ;  
 Though borne on rough seas to a far bloody shore,  
 Maybe to return to Lochaber no more.

Though hurricanes rise, and rise every wind,  
 They'll ne'er mak a tempest like that in my mind ;  
 Though loudest o' thunder on louder waves roar,  
 That's naething like leaving my love on the shore.  
 To leave thee behind me my heart is sair pained,  
 By ease that's inglorious no fame can be gained ;  
 And beauty and love's the reward of the brave,  
 And I must deserve it before I can crave.

Then glory, my Jeanie, maun plead my excuse ;  
 Since honour commands me, how can I refuse ?  
 Without it I ne'er can have merit for thee,  
 And without thy favour I'd better not be.  
 I gae then, my lass, to win honour and fame,  
 And if I should luck to come gloriously hame,  
 I'll bring a heart to thee with love running o'er,  
 And then I'll leave thee and Lochaber no more.



## DESCRIPTION OF HIMSELF

Imprimis, then, for tallness, I  
 Am five foot and four inches high ;  
 A black-a-vised<sup>1</sup> snod dapper fellow,  
 Nor lean, nor overlaid wi' tallow ;  
 With phiz of a morocco cut,  
 Resembling a late man of wit,  
 Auld gabbet Spec,<sup>2</sup> who was so cunning  
 To be a dummie ten years running.  
 Then for the fabric of my mind,  
 'Tis mair to mirth than grief inclined :  
 I rather choose to laugh at folly,  
 Than show dislike by melancholy ;  
 Well judging a sour heavy face  
 Is not the truest mark of grace.  
 I hate a drunkard or a glutton,  
 Yet I'm nae fae to wine and mutton ;  
 Great tables ne'er engaged my wishes,  
 When crowded with o'er mony dishes ;  
 A healthfu' stomach, sharply set,  
 Prefers a back-sey<sup>3</sup> piping het.  
 I never could imagine 't vicious  
 Of a fair fame to be ambitious :  
 Proud to be thought a comic poet,  
 And let a judge of numbers know it,  
 I court occasion thus to show it.

## THE REV. ROBERT BLAIR

1699-1746

IF Robert Blair had not written his famous poem *The Grave*, his other works would not have called particular attention to his talents as a writer of verse. He was born in Edinburgh in the year 1699. His father was the Rev. David Blair, minister of the Old Church of that metropolis, and a Chaplain-in-Ordinary to the King. Robert lost his father when he was a child, and his education was conducted with great care by his mother. Early in life he went to Holland to complete his classical education. On his return to Edinburgh, he published some slight poems, which did not receive much attention, though they were not without promise. He became a minister of the Scotch Church, and in 1731, when he was thirty-one years of age, he was appointed to the charge of Athelstaneford, a parish in East Lothian. His talents attracted the attention of Dr. Watts and Dr. Doddridge, with whom he frequently corresponded. He married, and had several

<sup>1</sup> Dark-complexioned.<sup>2</sup> The *Spectator*, No. 1, by Addison.<sup>3</sup> A sirloin.



children, his fourth son rising to be Lord President of the Court of Session. The poet died on the 4th of February, 1746, in his fortyseventh year.

It was during his student days that Blair wrote *The Grave*, but it was not published until 1743. At first it did not make much impression on the public mind, but in a very short time its unquestionable merits began to be more fully appreciated, and the reputation of its author became firmly established. Burns frequently refers to it in terms of praise, and quotes it in some of his letters. It is remarkable for its pathos, originality, wealth of imagery, gentleness of feeling, and purity of moral tone. It has been accused of gloominess, but has never been charged with dulness. It is a notable fact that it was declined at first by London publishers as a doubtful speculation, but has, since its first appearance, gone through very many editions.

#### DEATH

How shocking must thy summons be, O Death !  
 To him that is at ease in his possessions ;  
 Who, counting on long years of pleasure here,  
 Is quite unfurnish'd for that world to come !  
 In that dread moment, how the frantic soul  
 Raves round the walls of her clay tenement,  
 Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,  
 But shrieks in vain ! How wishfully she looks  
 On all she's leaving, now no longer hers !  
 A little longer, yet a little longer,  
 Oh might she stay to wash away her stains,  
 And fit her for her passage ! Mournful sight !  
 Her very eyes weep blood ; and every groan  
 She heaves is big with horror : but the foe,  
 Like a stanch murderer, steady to his purpose,  
 Pursues her close through every lane of life,  
 Nor misses once the track, but presses on ;  
 Till, forced at last to the tremendous verge,  
 At once she sinks to everlasting ruin !

\* \* \* \* \*

If death were nothing, and nought after death ;  
 If, when men died, at once they ceased to be,  
 Returning to the barren womb of nothing,  
 Whence first they sprung ; then might the debauchee  
 Untrembling mouth the heavens ; then might the drunkard  
 Reel over his full bowl, and, when 'tis drain'd,  
 Fill up another to the brim, and laugh  
 At the poor bugbear, Death ; then might the wretch  
 That's weary of the world, and tired of life,  
 At once give each inquietude the slip,  
 By stealing out of being when he pleased,  
 And by what way, whether by hemp or steel :  
 Death's thousand doors stand open. Who could force  
 The ill-pleased guest to sit out his full time,



Or blame him if he goes ? Sure he does well,  
 That helps himself as timely as he can,  
 When able. But, if there's an hereafter—  
 And that there is, conscience, uninfluenced,  
 And suffer'd to speak out, tells ev'ry man—  
 Then must it be an awful thing to die :  
 More horrid yet to die by one's own hand !  
 Self-murder ! Name it not, our island's shame.  
 That makes her the reproach of neighb'ring states.  
 Shall Nature, swerving from her earliest dictate,  
 Self-preservation, fall by her own act ?  
 Forbid it, Heaven ! Let not, upon disgust,  
 The shameless hand be foully crimson'd o'er  
 With blood of its own lord. Dreadful attempt !  
 Just reeking from self-slaughter, in a rage  
 To rush into the presence of our Judge ;  
 As if we challenged Him to do His worst,  
 And matter'd not His wrath ! Unheard-of tortures  
 Must be reserved for such : these herd together.  
 The common damn'd shun their society,  
 And look upon themselves as fiends less foul.  
 Our time is fix'd, and all our days are number'd ;  
 How long, how short, we know not :—this we know.  
 Duty requires we calmly wait the summons,  
 Nor dare to stir till Heaven shall give permission :  
 Like sentries that must keep their destined stand,  
 And wait th' appointed hour, till they're relieved.  
 Those only are the brave who keep their ground,  
 And keep it to the last. To run away  
 From this world's ills, that, at the very worst,  
 Will soon blow o'er, thinking to mend ourselves  
 By boldly venturing on a world unknown,  
 And plunging headlong in the dark ; 'tis mad !  
 No frenzy half so desperate as this.

#### FRIENDSHIP

Friendship ! mysterious cement of the soul !  
 Sweet'ner of life, and solder of society !  
 I owe thee much. Thou hast deserved of me  
 Far, far beyond whatever I can pay.  
 Oft have I proved the labours of thy love,  
 And the warm efforts of the gentle heart,  
 Anxious to please. O ! when my friend and I  
 In some thick wood have wander'd heedless on,  
 Hid from the vulgar eye, and sat us down  
 Upon the sloping cowslip-covered bank,  
 Where the pure limpid stream has slid along,  
 In grateful errors through the underwood,  
 Sweet murmuring, methought the shrill-tongued thrush  
 Mended his song of love ; the sooty blackbird  
 Mellow'd his pipe, and soften'd every note ;  
 The eglantine smell'd sweeter, and the rose  
 Assumed a die more deep ; whilst every flower  
 Vied with his fellow-plant in luxury  
 Of dress. O ! then the longest summer's day  
 Seem'd too, too much in haste ; still the full heart  
 Had not imparted half—'tis happiness  
 Too exquisite to last !



## DESCRIPTION OF A CATHEDRAL AT MIDNIGHT

See yonder hallow'd fane ! the pious work  
 Of names once famed, now dubious or forgot,  
 And buried 'midst the wreck of things which were :  
 There lie interred the most illustrious dead.  
 The wind is up : hark ! how it howls ! methinks  
 Till now I never heard a sound so dreary !  
 Doors creak, and windows clap, and night's foul bird,  
 Rock'd in the spire, screams loud : the gloomy aisles,  
 Black-plastered, and hung round with shreds of 'scutcheons,  
 And tattered coats-of-arms, send back the sound,  
 Laden with heavier airs, from the low vaults,  
 The mansions of the dead. Roused from their slumbers,  
 In grim array the grisly spectres rise,  
 Grin horrible, and, obstinately sullen,  
 Pass and repass, hushed as the foot of night.  
 Again the screech-owl shrieks—ungracious sound !  
 I'll hear no more ; it makes one's blood run chill !

## JAMES THOMSON

1700-1748

THE author of *The Seasons* was born at Ednam, near Kelso, in Roxburghshire. His father was the minister of the parish, and the future poet was destined at first to follow the same profession. But his poetic instincts and aspirations, which had shown themselves when he was quite a boy, led him to abandon the idea. After receiving his education in Edinburgh, he migrated to London, and began a literary career. He had already sketched out a considerable portion of his poem on *Winter*. This he showed to Mallet, who was held in high repute as a critic, and by whom he was strongly urged to complete and publish it. In early days he acted as tutor to the son of Lord Binning, subsequently acting as travelling companion to the son of Lord Chancellor Talbot. In this capacity he went to Italy for awhile, after which, in 1726, he published his poem on *Winter*. This work was received with very great favour by the reading public, and obtained for him the praise and friendship of Pope and other men of distinction in the literary world. It is said that Pope, who was then *facile princeps* amongst living writers, not only favoured Thomson with excellent advice, but even went so far as to correct and improve upon his manuscript. *Summer* appeared in 1727, and *Spring* and *Autumn* soon followed, thus completing the set of poems with which the name of James Thomson is most closely identified in the mind of every student of literature.



Talbot, the Chancellor, bestowed upon Thomson a sinecure office, which rendered him independent as long as he held it, but on the death of his patron he lost it, a fact for which his indolence has been held accountable. Other offices of a like nature were bestowed upon him. At length he retired to a comfortable cottage near Richmond, where he lived 'in modest luxury and literary ease.' He died, at the comparatively early age of forty-eight, from the effects of a cold caught in boating on the Thames.

He was buried at Richmond, and a monument was erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey in 1762, with the profits arising from an edition of his works published by Millar.

Speaking of Thomson's first arrival in London, friendless and homeless, with no definite object except to search for fortune, Dr. Johnson tells the following story :

'He was one day loitering about with the gaping curiosity of a new-comer, his attention upon everything rather than his pocket, when his handkerchief, containing his letters of recommendation to several persons of consequence, was stolen from him ; and now the lonely poet, in the vast city, first felt his inexperience and his poverty. A pair of shoes was his first want, his manuscript of the poem on *Winter* his only property.' As is frequently the case with works of prose and poetry which are destined to be famous, it was rejected by several publishers at first. At length the author unwisely sold the copyright to a publisher for the trifling sum of three guineas. But Sir Spencer Compton, to whom it was dedicated, made Thomson a present of twenty guineas. The Earl of Minto, in his charming biography of Thomson, tells the following amusing anecdote :

'Sir Gilbert Elliot, of Minto, afterwards Lord Justice Clerk, a man of elegant taste, was an early friend of Thomson ; and when the first edition of *The Seasons* came out, the author sent a copy, handsomely bound, to Sir Gilbert, who showed it to a relation of Thomson's, a gardener at Minto. The man took the book into his hands, and, turning it over and over, gazed on it with admiration, on which Sir Gilbert said to him, " Well, David, what do you think of James Thomson now ? There's a book will make him famous all the world over, and immortalize his name." David, looking now at Sir Gilbert and now at the book, said, " In troth, sir, it is a grand book ! I did na'



think the lad was so clever as to ha' done sic neat a piece of handicraft."''

Dr. Johnson, Dr. Aikin, Coleridge, Campbell, and other eminent critics, have paid high tributes to the poetical genius of Thomson. Campbell has adequately and eloquently described the beauties of his descriptive passages in the following terms :

' Habits of early admiration teach us all to look back upon this poet as the favourite companion of our solitary walks, and as the author who has first or chiefly reflected back to our minds a heightened or refined sensation of the delight which rural scenery affords us. The judgment of cooler years may somewhat abate our estimation of him, though it will still leave us the essential features of his poetical character to abide the test of reflection. The unvaried pomp of his diction suggests a most unfavourable comparison with the manly and idiomatic simplicity of Cowper ; at the same time, the pervading spirit and feeling of his poetry is in general more bland and delightful than that of his great rival in rural description. Thomson seems to contemplate the creation with an eye of unqualified pleasure and ecstasy, and to love its inhabitants with a lofty and hallowed feeling of religious happiness. Cowper also has his philanthropy, but it is dashed with religious terrors, and with themes of satire, regret, and reprehension. Cowper's image of Nature is more curiously distinct and familiar. Thomson carries our associations through a wider circuit of speculation and sympathy. His touches cannot be more faithful than Cowper's, but they are more soft and select, and less disturbed by the intrusion of homely objects. / It is but justice to say that amidst the feeling of fancy of *The Seasons* we meet with interruptions of declamations, heavy narrative, and unhappy digression—with a parhelion eloquence that throws a counterfeit glow of expression on commonplace ideas—as when he treats us to the solemnly ridiculous bathing of Musidora, or draws from the classics instead of Nature ; or, after invoking inspiration from her hermit seat, makes his dedicatory bow to a patronizing countess or Speaker of the House of Commons. As long as he dwells in the pure contemplation of Nature, and appeals to the universal poetry of the human breast, his redundant style comes to us as something venial and adventitious—it is the flowing vesture of the Druid, and perhaps to the general experience is rather imposing ; but when he returns to the familiar



relations and courtesies of life, the same diction ceases to have the mantle of inspiration, and only strikes us by its unwieldy difference from the common costume of expression.'

A lengthened criticism is due to one who has been justly called the best of our descriptive poets, though some have maintained that he is excelled in the power of *rural* description by Cowper. But we must remember that *The Seasons* was the first poem of its kind, and therefore the author was unaided by that inspiration which is afforded by previous models. It must therefore be accredited with the virtue of spontaneity, in addition to its other excellences.

Thomson's other works comprise the *Castle of Indolence*, a delightful, half-playful poem, which has by some critics been placed above *The Seasons* in order of merit. It is an imitation of the style and manner of Spenser. It certainly contains many magnificent passages. *Liberty* is an ambitious and not altogether successful poem, of which Dr. Johnson said, 'I tried to read it, and soon desisted. I have never tried again, and therefore will not hazard either praise or blame.' His last work was a tragedy called *Coriolanus*, published in May, 1748, two months before his death.

Thomson is said to have been an excellent son, an affectionate brother, and a sincere friend. He was generous to literary associates who were in poor circumstances, and Savage was one of those whom he often helped. He was indolent, and carried his fondness for the good things of life to the verge of intemperance. The following story is told of him by Tuckerman, an American critic :

'A literary lady invited him to pass the summer at her country seat, but, instead of flattering her intellectual propensity by sage conversation, he preferred to sip wine with her husband, and so lost the favour of a countess. He was once seen to bite the sunny side out of a peach with his hands in his pockets. A lover of music, he did not fatigue himself with blowing a flute or flourishing a fiddle-bow, but kept an Æolian harp in his window, and listened to the nightingales.

Lend me your song. ye nightingales ! oh pour  
The mazy running soul of melody  
Into my varied verse.

He courted the great for patronage, rather than seek toilsome gains by the industrious exercise of his powers.'



The poet Collins has paid this tribute to the memory of this illustrious singer:

' In yonder grave a Druid lies,  
Where slowly winds the stealing wave ;  
The year's best sweets shall duteous rise  
To deck its poet's sylvan grave.  
Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore,  
When Thames in summer wreaths is drest,  
And oft suspend the dripping oar,  
To bid his gentle spirit rest.'

#### FROM HYMN ON 'THE SEASONS'

These, as they change, Almighty Father, these  
Are but the varied God. The rolling year  
Is full of Thee. Forth in the pleasing Spring  
Thy beauty walks, Thy tenderness and love.  
Wide flush the fields ; the softening air is balm ;  
Echo the mountains round ; the forest smiles ;  
And every sense, and every heart, is joy.  
Then comes Thy glory in the summer months,  
With light and heat refulgent. Then Thy sun  
Shoots full perfection through the swelling year ;  
And oft Thy voice in dreadful thunder speaks ;  
And oft at dawn, deep noon, or falling eve,  
By brooks and groves, in hollow-whispering gales.  
Thy bounty shines in Autumn unconfined,  
And spreads a common feast for all that lives.  
In Winter awful Thou ! With clouds and storms  
Around Thee thrown, tempest o'er tempest roll'd,  
Majestic darkness ! on the whirlwind's wing  
Riding sublime, Thou bidd'st the world adore,  
And humblest nature with Thy northern blast.

#### FROM 'SPRING'

See where the winding vale its lavish stores,  
Irriguous, spreads. See, how the lily drinks  
The latent rill, scarce oozing through the grass,  
Of growth luxuriant ; or the humid bank  
In fair profusion decks. Long let us walk,  
Where the breeze blows from yon extended field  
Of blossom'd beans. Arabia cannot boast  
A fuller gale of joy, than, liberal, thence  
Breathes through the sense, and takes the ravish'd soul.  
Nor is the mead unworthy of thy foot,  
Full of fresh verdure, and unnumbered flowers,  
The negligence of Nature, wide and wild ;  
Where, undisguised by mimic Art, she spreads  
Unbounded beauty to the roving eye.  
Here their delicious task the fervent bees,  
In swarming millions, tend : around, athwart,  
Through the soft air, the busy nations fly,  
Cling to the bud, and, with inserted tube,  
Suck its pure essence, its ethereal soul ;  
And oft, with bolder wing, they soaring dare  
The purple heath, or where the wild thyme grows,  
And yellow load them with the luscious spoil.



## DAWN IN SUMMER

When now no more th' alternate Twins are fired,  
 And Cancer reddens with the solar blaze,  
 Short is the doubtful empire of the Night,  
 And soon, observant of approaching Day,  
 The meek-eyed Morn appears, mother of dews,  
 At first faint-gleaming in the dappled east ;  
 Till far o'er ether spreads the widening glow ;  
 And, from before the lustre of her face,  
 White break the clouds away. With quicken'd step,  
 Brown Night retires : young Day pours in apace,  
 And opens all the lawny prospect wide.  
 The dripping rock, the mountain's misty top,  
 Swell on the sight, and brighten with the dawn.  
 Blue, through the dusk, the smoking currents shine ;  
 And from the bladed field the fearful hare  
 Limpers awkward ; while along the forest-glade  
 The wild deer trip, and often turning, gaze  
 At early passenger. Music awakes  
 The native voice of undissembled joy ;  
 And thick around the woodland hymns arise.  
 Roused by the cock, the soon-clad shepherd leaves  
 His mossy cottage, where with Peace he dwells ;  
 And from the crowded fold, in order, drives  
 His flock, to taste the verdure of the morn.

## FROM THE 'CASTLE OF INDOLENCE'

Behold ! ye pilgrims of this earth, behold !  
 See all but man with unearn'd pleasure gay :  
 See her bright robes the butterfly unfold,  
 Broke from her wintry tomb in prime of May !  
 What youthful bride can equal her array ?  
 Who can with her for easy pleasure vie ?  
 From mead to mead with gentle wing to stray,  
 From flower to flower on balmy gales to fly,  
 Is all she has to do beneath the radiant sky.

Behold the merry minstrels of the morn,  
 The swarming songsters of the careless grove ;  
 Ten thousand throats that, from the flowering thorn,  
 Hymn their good God, and carol sweet of love ;  
 Such grateful kindly raptures them emove !  
 They neither plough nor sow ; ne, fit for flail,  
 E'er to the barn the nodding sheaves they drove :  
 Yet theirs each harvest dancing in the gale,  
 Whatever crowns the hill, or smiles along the vale.

Outcast of nature, man ! the wretched thrall  
 Of bitter-dropping sweat, of sweltry pain,  
 Of cares that eat away the heart with gall,  
 And of the vices, an inhuman train,  
 That all proceed from savage thirst of gain :  
 For when hard-hearted Interest first began  
 To poison earth, Astræa left the plain ;  
 Guile, Violence, and Murder seized on man,  
 And, for soft milky streams, with blood the rivers ran.



## EVENING IN AUTUMN

The western sun withdraws the shorten'd day,  
 And humid evening, gliding o'er the sky  
 In her chill progress, to the ground condensed  
 The vapours throws. Where creeping waters ooze,  
 Where marshes stagnate, and where rivers wind,  
 Cluster the rolling fogs, and swim along  
 The dusky-mantled lawn. Meanwhile the Moon,  
 Full-orb'd, and breaking through the scatter'd clouds,  
 Shows her broad visage in the crimson east.  
 Turn'd to the Sun direct, her spotted disk—  
 Where mountains rise, umbrageous dales descend,  
 And caverns deep, as optic tube describes,  
 A smaller earth—gives all his blaze again,  
 Void of its flame, and sheds a softer day.  
 Now through the passing cloud she seems to stoop,  
 Now up the pure cerulean rides sublime,  
 Wide the pale deluge floats, and streaming mild  
 O'er the skied mountain to the shadowy vale,  
 While rocks and floods reflect the quivering gleam,  
 The whole air whitens with a boundless tide  
 Of silver radiance, trembling round the world.

## ROBERT BURNS

1759-1796

ALMOST by universal consent, the chief place amongst the poets of Scotland is assigned to Robert Burns, the 'Ploughman Bard.' He was the son of a yeoman farmer, and was born near Kirk Alloway, in Ayrshire, in the year 1759. In early life he worked as a labourer on his father's farm, but his education was not entirely neglected. Mr. Shaw points out that 'popular education was at that period far more generally diffused in Scotland than in any other country in Europe; and the future glory of his nation was able to acquire, partly by the wise care of his father and partly by his own avidity for knowledge, a degree of intellectual culture which would have been surprising in any other country.' His father's talents were of a superior order; he had read many books with the carefulness of a student; he was pious, sincere, and upright in his dealings; and he was punctilious in promoting the spiritual and intellectual advancement of his children. Robert says of him in one of his poems:

My father was a farmer, upon the Carrick border, O;  
 And carefully he bred me in decency and order, O;  
 He bade me act a manly part, though I had ne'er a farthing, O;  
 For without an honest, manly heart, no man is worth regarding, O.



His mother was in her way a remarkable woman, possessing powers of mind above the average of women in her station in life. Her influence upon her poet son was of the best and gentlest. In a letter to Dr. Moore, Burns gives some interesting details of his early life. It appears from this document that he was placed at school in the sixth year of his age, under the care of a master named Campbell. A few months later he was transferred to the care of John Murdoch, who was a very conscientious and painstaking teacher. Gilbert Burns was also one of Murdoch's pupils, and, after the death of Robert, the tutor published an account of the impressions which the two brothers made upon him.

It is always a matter of special interest to trace, when possible, the circumstances which first lead a poetic mind to clothe its thoughts in verse. Robert Burns tells us that he traces the formation of his character as a poet to the influence of a superstitious old woman who resided with his family, and who used to excite his youthful imagination by narrating extraordinary stories of ghosts, fairies, witches, and giants, and singing wild and romantic songs.

Robert was at this period of his life a very diligent student in a wider field of learning than was afforded by his ordinary school-books. Mason's *English Collection*, *The Life of Hannibal*, Addison's *Hymns and Allegorical Tales*, and the *History of Sir William Wallace* were amongst the works which he read most carefully. His father taught him arithmetic in the evenings, and subsequently the future poet acquired a smattering of algebra, geometry, surveying, and French. He tried to learn Latin, but failed in the attempt through want of a teacher. Before he was sixteen years of age he had read most of the principal standard works in English literature, a good deal of history, and the poetical works of Shakespeare, Pope, Allan Ramsay, Thomson, and Shenstone. He delighted in poetry, and always carried a volume of verse about with him. 'The collection of songs,' he says, 'was my *vade mecum*. I pored over them, driving my cart or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse, carefully noticing the true, tender, or sublime from the affectation or fustian; and I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic-craft, such as it is.'

The details of the poet's life, apart from his achievements in



literature, are not pleasant to dwell upon. His constant struggles with poverty, his indiscretions and excesses, so strangely inconsistent with the natural dignity of his character and the benevolence of his heart, all are so well known that they need not be dilated upon here. His story is a melancholy one. With regard to his character, Irving, one of his numerous biographers, observes : ' To counterbalance his errors, he was unquestionably possessed of noble virtues ; and although it can never be justifiable to write an apology for vice, it may at least be deemed pardonable to offer some palliation for the backslidings of a man so fatally exposed to untoward accidents. Impartiality of judgment it can never be preposterous to exercise, but rigid and unrelenting scrutiny is not the province of those who are aware of the general lot of humanity, and of their individual breaches of the multifarious duties which religion and morality impose.'

Suffice it, then, to say that, as a result of indiscreet and occasionally intemperate living, the poet, after a brief term of unbounded popularity, died in destitution on the 21st of July, 1796, being then in the thirty-eighth year of his age. The poet Wordsworth, who was the author of a touching and eloquent defence of Burns, on visiting that poet's grave in 1803, wrote the following lines :

Let no mean hope your souls enslave—  
Be independent, generous, brave—  
Your poet such example gave,  
And such revere ;  
But be admonished by his grave,  
And think and fear.

Amongst the many poetical tributes to the memory of this son of song, which would in themselves make a respectable volume of verse, we may also quote the lines of Campbell :

Farewell, high chief of Scottish song !  
Thou couldst alternately impart  
Wisdom and rapture in thy page,  
And brand each vice with satire strong  
Whose lines are mottoes of the heart,  
Whose truths electrify the sage.

Farewell ! and ne'er may envy dare  
To wring one baleful poison drop  
From the crush'd laurels of thy bust :  
But while the lark sings sweet in air,  
Still may the grateful pilgrim stop,  
To bless the spot that holds thy dust.



When Burns' poems were published, in 1786, they were received by the general public with unbounded enthusiasm. The peasant-poet was fêted as a phenomenon, and became the petted idol of Edinburgh Society. A second edition was soon called for, and for a time Burns was placed above the reach of want. But before he died he had wasted all his gains.

Dr. Craik, in his *Sketches of the History of Literature*, gives high praise to the poetical genius of Burns. He gives the palm of superiority to his lyrical pieces. 'Even out of his own country,' he says, 'his songs, to be sure, have taken all hearts; and they are the very flame-breath of his own. No truer poetry exists in any language or in any form. But it is the poetry of the heart much more than of either the head or the imagination. Burns' songs do not at all resemble the exquisite lyrical snatches with which Shakespeare, and also Beaumont and Fletcher, have sprinkled some of their dramas, enlivening the busy scene and progress of the action as the progress of the wayfarer is enlivened by the voices of birds in the hedgerows, or the sight and scent of wild-flowers that have sprung up by the roadside. They are never in any sense exercises of ingenuity, but always utterances of passion, and simple and direct as a shout of laughter or a gush of tears. Whatever they have of fancy, whatever they have of melody, is born of real emotion—is merely the natural expression of the poet's feeling at the moment, seeking and finding vent in musical words. Since "burning Sappho loved and sung" in the old isles of Greece, not much poetry has been produced so thrillingly tender as some of the best of these songs.'

In Morley's *Men of Letters* series, Principal Shairp, then Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford, attempts to sum up the peculiar genius of the poet much on the same general lines as Thomas Carlyle:

'At the basis of all his power lay absolute truthfulness, intense reality—truthfulness to the objects which he saw, truthfulness to himself as the seer of them. . . . Here was a man, a son of toil, looking out on the world from his cottage—on society high or low, on nature homely or beautiful, with the clearest eye, the most piercing insight, the warmest heart; touching life at a hundred points, seeing to the core all the sterling worth, nor less the pretence and hollowness of the men he met, the humour, the drollery, the pathos and the sorrow of human existence, and



expressing what he saw, not in the stock phrase of books, but in his own vernacular, the language of his fireside, with a directness, a force, a vitality that tingled to the finger-tips, and forced the phrases of his peasant's dialect into literature, and made them for ever classical. Large sympathy, generous enthusiasm, reckless abandonment, fierce indignation, melting passion, rare flashes of moral insight, all were there. Everywhere you see the strong intellect made alive and driven home to the mark by the fervid heart behind it.'

Thomas Carlyle's Essay on Burns appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* as long ago as 1828. Although it was one of the earliest of his literary efforts, it is characteristic of its author. It is always interesting to see what one man of genius thinks of another man of genius, and in Carlyle's Essay we have the greatest Scotchman of this century delivering judgment upon the greatest Scotchman of last century—Sir Walter Scott, of course, excepted, for he was of both centuries and for all time. Carlyle's verdict is that 'in sober judgments Burns appears not only as a true British poet, but as one of the most considerable British men of the eighteenth century.' There are those who complain that his poems are imperfect and of small extent, and that his genius attained no mastery in its art. 'Alas! his sun shone as through a tropical tornado; and the pale shadow of death eclipsed it at noon! Shrouded in such baleful vapours, the genius of Burns was never seen in clear azure splendour, enlightening the world, but some beams from it did by fits pierce through; and it tinted those clouds with rainbow and orient colours into glory and a stern grandeur, which men silently gazed on with wonder and tears!'

Carlyle then discusses the secret of this abiding popularity. He finds the explanation first in the sincerity of his poetry, then in the naturalness of his muse and the familiarity of his themes.

'He shows himself a poet of Nature's own making; and Nature, after all, is still the grand agent in making poets. A Scottish peasant's life was the meanest and rudest of all lives, till Burns became a poet in it and a poet of it; found it a *man's* life, and therefore significant to men. A thousand battlefields remain unsung; but the *Wounded Hare* has not perished without its memorial; a balm of mercy yet breathes on us from its dumb



agonies, because a poet was there. Our *Halloween* had passed and repassed, in rude awe and laughter, since the era of the Druids; but no Theocritus, till Burns, discerned in it the materials of a Scottish Idyll; neither was the *Holy Fair* any *Council of Trent* or Roman *Jubilee*; but nevertheless, *Superstition* and *Hypocrisy* and *Fun*, having been propitious to him, in this man's hand it became a poem, instinct with satire and genuine comic life.'

Burns did much for what is known as the romantic movement. He was not the first to versify the dialect of the Scottish peasantry, but he was unquestionably the first to lift it into the higher realms of poetry. All critics will agree that he takes his place in this respect with the greatest masters of the art—and the masters of this particular art are not many in number.

'But, splendid as is his passionate poetry,' says Mr. Watts-Dunton in a really great essay on *The Renaissance of Wonder in Poetry*, 'it is specially as an absolute humorist that he towers above all the poets of the eighteenth century. Undoubtedly, to get away on all occasions from the shadow of the great social pyramid was not to be expected of a poet at the time and in the condition in which Burns was born. Yet it is astonishing how this Scottish yeoman did get away from it at times, as in *A Man's a Man for a' that*. It is astonishing to realize how he was able to show a feeling for absolute humour such as in the eighteenth century had only been shown by prose writers—prose writers of the first rank—like Swift and Sterne. Indeed, if we did not remember that he followed the creator of Uncle Toby, he would take, if that were possible, a still higher place than he now does as an absolute humorist. Not even Uncle Toby's apostrophe to the fly is finer than Burns' lines to a mouse on turning her up with a plough. But his lines to a mountain daisy which he had turned down with the plough are full of deeper humour still—a humorous sympathy with the vegetable no less than with the animal kingdom. There is nothing in all poetry which touches it.'

This is high, some may think even exaggerated, praise. But the genius which can turn small and commonplace things to account in so great a way is worthy to take even higher rank as genius than that which merely translates into a new phrase what is already acknowledged to be great.



## TO A MOUSE

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH

*November, 1785*

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie !  
 O, what a panic's in thy breastie !  
 Thou need na start awa sae hastie,  
     Wi' bickering brattle !  
 I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,  
     Wi' murd'rin pattle.

I'm truly sorry Man's dominion  
 Has broken Nature's social union,  
 An' justifies that ill opinion  
     Which makes thee startle  
 At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,  
     An' fellow-mortal.

I doubt na, whiles, but thou may thieve :  
 What then ? poor beastie, thou maun live !  
 A daimenicker in a thrave  
     'S a sma' request :  
 I'll get a blessing wi' the lave,  
     An' never miss't.

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin !  
 It's silly wa's the win's are strewin' !  
 An' naething now to big a new ane  
     O' foggage green !  
 An' bleak December's winds ensuin',  
     Baith snell an' keen !

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,  
 An' weary winter comin' fast,  
 An' cozie here, beneath the blast,  
     Thou thought to dwell,  
 Till crash ! the cruel coulter past  
     Out through thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,  
 Has cost thee mony a weary nibble !  
 Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,  
     But house or hald,  
 To thole the winter's sleety dribble,  
     An' cranreuch cauld !

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,  
 In proving foresight may be vain :  
 The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men  
     Gang aft a-gley,  
 And lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,  
     For promis'd joy.

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me !  
 The present only toucheth thee :  
 But, och ! I backward cast my e'e,  
     On prospects drear !  
 And forward, though I canna see,  
     I guess an' fear.



THE AULD FARMER'S NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION TO  
HIS AULD MARE MAGGIE

ON GIVING HER THE ACCUSTOMED RIPP OF CORN TO HANSEL IN THE  
NEW YEAR

A Guid New Year I wish thee, Maggie !  
Hae, there's a ripp to thy auld baggie ;  
Tho' thou's howe-backit now, and knaggie,  
I've seen the day,  
Thou could hae gaen like ony staggie  
Out-owre the lay.

Tho' now thou's dowie, stift, and crazy,  
An' thy auld hide's as white's a daisy,  
I've seen thee dappl't, sleek, and glaizie,  
A bonny gray :  
He should been tight that daur't to raize thee  
Ance in a day.

Thou ance was i' the foremost rank,  
A filly buirdly, steeve, an' swank,  
An' set weel down a shapely shank  
As e'er tread yird ;  
An' could hae flown out-owre a stank  
Like ony bird.

It's now some nine-an'-twenty year  
Sin' thou was my guid father's meere ;  
He gied me thee, o' tocher clear,  
An' fifty mark :  
Tho' it was sma', 'twas weel-won gear,  
An' thou was stark.

When first I gaed to woo my Jenny,  
Ye then was trottin' wi' your minnie :  
Tho' ye was trickie, slee, an' funny,  
Ye ne'er was donsie ;  
But hamely, tawie, quiet, an' cannie,  
An' unco sonsie.

That day ye pranc'd wi' mickle pride,  
When ye bure hame my bonnie bride :  
An' sweet an' gracefu' she did ride,  
Wi' maiden air !  
Kyrle-Stewart I could bragged wide,  
For sic a pair.

Tho' now ye dow but hoyte an' hobble,  
An' wintle like a saumont-coble,  
That day ye was a jinker noble,  
For heels an' win' !  
An' ran them till they a' did wauble,  
Far, far behin' !

When thou an' I were young an' skeigh,  
An' stable-meals at fairs were dreigh,  
How thou wad prance, an' snore and skreigh,  
An' tak the road !  
Town's bodies ran, an' stood abeigh,  
An' ca't thee mad.



When thou was corn't, an' I was mellow,  
 We took the road aye like a swallow ;  
 At brooses thou had ne'er a fellow,  
     For pith an' speed ;  
 But ev'ry tail thou pay't them hollow,  
     Whare'er thou gaed.

The sma' droop-rumpl't, hunter cattle,  
 Might aiblins waur't thee for a brattle ;  
 But sax Scotch miles thou try't their mettle,  
     An' gar't them whaizle ;  
 Nae whip nor spur, but just a wattle  
     O' saugh or hazel.

Thou was a noble fittie-lan',  
 As e'er in tug or tow was drawn ;  
 Aft thee an' I, in aught hours gaun,  
     In guid March weather,  
 Hae turn'd sax rood beside our han'  
     For days thegither.

Thou never braindg't an' fetch't, an' fliskit,  
 But thy auld tail thou wad ha'e whiskit,  
 An' spread abreed thy weel-fill'd brisket,  
     Wi' pith an' pow'r.  
 Till spritty knows wad rair't an' risket,  
     An' slypet owre.

When frosts lay lang, an' snaws were deep  
 An' threaten'd labour back to keep,  
 I gied thy cog a wee bit heap  
     Aboon the timmer :  
 I ken'd my Maggie wadna sleep  
     For that, or simmer.

In cart or car thou never reestit ;  
 The steyst brae thou wad hae fac't it ;  
 Thou never lap, and sten't and breastit,  
     Then stood to blaw ;  
 But just thy step a wee thing hastit,  
     Thou snoov't awa'.

My pleugh is now thy bairn-time a' :  
 Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw ;  
 Forbye sax mae I've sell't awa',  
     That thou hast nurst ;  
 They drew me thretteen pund an' twa,  
     The vera warst.

Monie a sair daurk we twa ha'e wrought,  
 An' wi' the weary warl' fought !  
 An' monie an anxious day I thought  
     We wad be beat !  
 Yet here to crazy age we're brought  
     Wi' something yet.

And think na, my auld trusty servan',  
 That now perhaps thou's less deservin',  
 An' thy auld days may end in starvin',  
     For my last fou,  
 A heapit stimpert, I'll reserve ane,  
     Laid by for you.



## A HISTORY OF BRITISH POETRY

We've worn to crazy years thegither ;  
 We'll toyte about wi' ane anither ;  
 Wi' tentie care I'll fit thy tether  
     To some hain'd rig,  
 Whare ye may nobly rax your leather,  
     Wi' sma' fatigue.

## A PRAYER

## IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH

O Thou unknown Almighty Cause  
 Of all my hope and fear !  
 In whose dread presence, ere an hour,  
 Perhaps I must appear !

If I have wander'd in those paths  
 Of life I ought to shun—  
 As something, loudly, in my breast,  
 Remonstrates I have done—

Thou know'st that Thou hast formèd me  
 With passions wild and strong ;  
 And list'ning to their witching voice  
 Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has come short,  
 Or frailty stept aside,  
 Do Thou, All-good ! for such Thou art,  
 In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have err'd,  
 No other plea I have,  
 But Thou art good ; and goodness still  
 Delighteth to forgive.

## JOHN ANDERSON

John Anderson, my jo, John,  
 When we were first acquent,  
 Your locks were like the raven,  
 Your bonnie brow was brent ;  
 But now your brow is beld, John,  
 Your locks are like the snaw :  
 But blessings on your frosty pow,  
 John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John,  
 We clamb the hill thegither ;  
 And mony a canty day, John,  
 We've had wi' ane anither :  
 Now we maun totter down, John,  
 Now hand in hand we'll go ;  
 An' sleep thegither at the foot,  
 John Anderson, my jo.



## ADDRESS TO EDINBURGH

Edina ! Scotia's darling seat !  
 All hail thy palaces and tow'rs,  
 Where once beneath a monarch's feet  
 Sat Legislation's sovereign pow'rs !  
 From marking wildly-scatter'd flow'rs,  
 As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,  
 And singing lone, the ling'ring hours,  
 I shelter' in thy honour'd shade.

Here wealth still swells the golden tide,  
 As busy Trade his labour plies ;  
 There Architecture's noble pride  
 Bids elegance and splendour rise ;  
 Here Justice, from her native skies,  
 High wields her balance and her rod ;  
 There Learning, with his eagle eyes,  
 Seeks Science in her coy abode.

Thy sons, Edina ! social, kind,  
 With open arms, the stranger hail ;  
 Their views enlarg'd, their lib'ral mind,  
 Above the narrow, rural vale ;  
 Attentive still to sorrow's wail,  
 Or modest merit's silent claim ;  
 And never may their sources fail !  
 And never envy blot their name !

Thy daughters bright thy walks adorn ;  
 Gay as the gilded summer sky,  
 Sweet as the dewy milk-white thorn,  
 Dear as the raptur'd thrill of joy !  
 Fair Burnet strikes th' adoring eye,  
 Heav'n's beauties on my fancy shine ;  
 I see the Sire of Love on high,  
 And own his work indeed divine !

There, watching high the least alarms,  
 Thy rough, rude fortress gleams afar,  
 Like some bold vet'ran, gray in arms,  
 And mark'd with many a seamy scar :  
 The pond'rous walls and massy bar,  
 Grim-rising o'er the rugged rock,  
 Have oft withstood assailing war,  
 And oft repell'd th' invader's shock.

With awe-struck thought, and pitying tears,  
 I view that noble, stately dome,  
 Where Scotia's kings of other years,  
 Fam'd heroes ! had their royal home :  
 Alas ! how changed the times to come !  
 Their royal name low in the dust !  
 Their hapless race wild-wand'ring roam,  
 Tho' rigid law cries out, 'twas just !

Wild beats my heart to trace your steps,  
 Whose ancestors, in days of yore,  
 Thro' hostile ranks and ruin'd gaps  
 Old Scotia's bloody lion bore :



E'en I who sing in rustic lore,  
 Haply, my sires have left their shed,  
 And fac'd grim danger's loudest roar,  
 Bold-following where your fathers led.

Edina ! Scotia's darling seat !  
 All hail thy palaces and tow'rs,  
 Where once beneath a monarch's feet  
 Sat Legislation's sovereign pow'rs !  
 From marking wildly-scattered flow'rs,  
 As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,  
 And singing, lone, the ling'ring hours,  
 I shelter' in thy honour'd shade.

#### FOR A' THAT AN' A' THAT

Is there, for honest poverty,  
 That hangs his head, an' a' that ?  
 The coward slave, we pass him by,  
 We dare be poor for a' that !  
 For a' that, an' a' that,  
 Our toil's obscure, and a' that ;  
 The rank is but the guinea's stamp,  
 The man's the gowd for a' that.  
 What though on hamely fare we dine,  
 Wear hoddin grey, an' a' that ;  
 Gie fools their silks, an' knaves their wine,  
 A man's a man for a' that !  
 For a' that, an' a' that,  
 Their tinsel show, an' a' that ;  
 The honest man, though e'er sae poor,  
 Is king o' men for a' that !  
 You see yon birkie,<sup>1</sup> ca'd a lord,  
 Wha struts, and stares, an' a' that,  
 Though hundreds worship at his word,  
 He's but a coof for a' that.  
 For a' that, an' a' that,  
 His riband, star, an' a' that,  
 The man of independent mind,  
 He looks an' laughs at a' that.  
 A prince can mak' a belted knight,  
 A marquis, duke, an' a' that ;  
 But an honest man aboon his might,  
 Guid faith, he mauna fa' that ;  
 For a' that, an' a' that,  
 Their dignities, an' a' that,  
 The pith o' sense, an' pride o' worth,  
 Are higher ranks than a' that.  
 Then let us pray that come it may—  
 As come it will for a' that—  
 That sense an' worth, o'er a' the earth,  
 May bear the gree, and a' that.  
 For a' that, an' a' that,  
 It's comin' yet, for a' that,  
 That man to man, the world o'er,  
 Shall brothers be for a' that !

---

Literally, a mettlesome fellow ; here, a proud and affected fellow.



## FAIR JEANIE

When first I saw fair Jeanie's face,  
 I couldna tell what ailed me,  
 My heart went fluttering pit-a-pat,  
 My een they almost failed me.  
 She's aye sae neat, sae trim, sae tight,  
 All grace does round her hover,  
 Ae look deprived me o' my heart,  
 An' I became a lover.

She's aye, aye sae blithe, sae gay,  
 She's aye so blithe an' cheerie ;  
 She's aye sae bonnie, blithe, an' gay,  
 O gin I were her dearie !

Had I Dundas's whole estate,  
 Or Hopetoun's wealth to shine in ;  
 Did warlike laurels crown my brow,  
 Or humbler bays entwining—  
 I'd lay them a' at Jeanie's feet,  
 Could I but hope to move her,  
 An' prouder than a belted knight,  
 I'd be my Jeanie's lover.

She's aye, aye sae blithe, etc.

But sair I fear some happier swain  
 Has gained sweet Jeanie's favour :  
 If so, may every bliss be hers,  
 Though I maun never have her :  
 But gang she east, or gang she west,  
 'Twixt Forth and Tweed all over,  
 While men have eyes, or ears, or taste,  
 She'll always find a lover.

She's aye, aye sae blithe, etc.

## THE BANKS OF AYR

The gloomy night is gath'ring fast,  
 Loud roars the wild inconstant blast ;  
 Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,  
 I see it driving o'er the plain ;  
 The hunter now has left the moor,  
 The scatter'd coveys meet secure ;  
 While here I wander, prest with care,  
 Along the lonely banks of Ayr.

The Autumn mourns her rip'ning corn,  
 By early Winter's ravage torn ;  
 Across her placid, azure sky,  
 She sees the scowling tempest fly :  
 Chill runs my blood to hear it rave—  
 I think upon the stormy wave,  
 Where many a danger I must dare,  
 Far from the bonnie banks of Ayr.

'Tis not the surging billows' roar,  
 'Tis not that fatal deadly shore ;  
 Tho' death in ev'ry shape appear,  
 The wretched have no more to fear :



But round my heart the ties are bound,  
That heart transpierc'd with many a wound ;  
These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,  
To leave the bonnie banks of Ayr.

Farewell, old Coila's hills and dales,  
Her heathy moors and winding vales ;  
The scenes where wretched fancy roves,  
Pursuing past, unhappy loves !  
Farewell, my friends ! farewell, my foes !  
My peace with these, my love with those—  
The bursting tears my heart declare ;  
Farewell the bonnie banks of Ayr !

#### A BARD'S EPITAPH

[ ' Here is a sincere and solemn avowal—a confession at once devout, poetical, and human—a history in the shape of a prophecy.'—WORDS-WORTH.]

Is there a whim-inspired fool,  
Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,  
Owre blate to seek, owre proud to snool ?  
Let him draw near ;  
And owre this grassy heap sing dool,  
And drap a tear.

Is there a bard of rustic song  
Who, noteless, steals the crowds among  
That weekly this area throng ?  
O, pass not by !  
But, with a frater-feeling strong,  
Here heave a sigh.

Is there a man, whose judgment clear  
Can others teach the course to steer,  
Yet runs, himself, life's mad career  
Wild as the wave ?  
Here pause—and, through the starting tear,  
Survey this grave.

The poor inhabitant below  
Was quick to learn, and wise to know,  
And keenly felt the friendly glow,  
And softer flame ;  
But thoughtless follies laid him low,  
And stained his name !

Reader, attend ! Whether thy soul  
Soars Fancy's flights beyond the pole,  
Or darkling grubs this earthly hole  
In low pursuit ;  
Know, prudent, cautious self-control  
Is wisdom's root.

#### THE WINTER STORM

The wintry west extends his blast,  
And hail and rain does blaw ;  
Or the stormy north sends driving forth  
The blinding sleet and snaw :  
While tumbling brown, the burn comes down,  
And roars frae bank to brae ;  
And bird and beast in covert rest,  
And pass the heartless day.



'The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast,'<sup>1</sup>  
 The joyless winter day,  
 Let others fear, to me more dear  
 Than all the pride of May :  
 The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,  
 My griefs it seems to join ;  
 The leafless trees my fancy please,  
 Their fate resembles mine !  
 Thou Pow'r Supreme, whose mighty scheme  
 These woes of mine fulfil ;  
 Here firm I rest, they must be best,  
 Because they are Thy will !  
 Then all I want (oh ! do Thou grant  
 This one request of mine !)  
 Since to enjoy Thou dost deny,  
 Assist me to resign.

## AE FOND KISS

[Supposed to relate to his parting with Clarinda. 'These exquisitely affecting stanzas contain the essence of a thousand love-tales.'—SCOTT.]

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever ;  
 Ae fareweel, alas ! for ever !  
 Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,  
 Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee,  
 Who shall say that fortune grieves him,  
 While the star of hope she leaves him ?  
 Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me ;  
 Dark despair around me beights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,  
 Naething would resist my Nancy ;  
 But to see her was to love her,  
 Love but her, and love for ever.  
 Had we never lov'd sae kindly,  
 Had we never lov'd sae blindly,  
 Never met—or never parted,  
 We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest ;  
 Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest !  
 Thine be ilka joy and treasure,  
 Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure !  
 Ae fond kiss, and then we sever ;  
 Ae fareweel, alas ! for ever !  
 Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,  
 Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee !

## TO MARY IN HEAVEN

Thou ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,  
 That lov'st to greet the early morn,  
 Again thou usher'st in the day  
 My Mary from my soul was torn.  
 Oh Mary ! dear departed shade !  
 Where is thy place of blissful rest ?  
 See'st thou thy lover lowly laid ?  
 Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast ?

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Young.



That sacred hour can I forget ;  
 Can I forget the hallowed grove,  
 Where by the winding Ayr we met,  
 To live one day of parting love !  
 Eternity will not efface  
 Those records dear of transports past—  
 Thy image at our last embrace ;  
 Ah ! little thought we 'twas our last !

Ayr, gurgling, kiss'd his pebb'l'd shore,  
 O'erhung with wild woods, thick'ning green ;  
 The fragrant birch, and hawthorn hoar,  
 Twin'd amorous round the raptur'd scene ;  
 The flow'rs sprang wanton to be prest,  
 The birds sang love on every spray—  
 Till soon, too soon, the glowing west  
 Proclaim'd the speed of wingèd day.

Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,  
 And fondly broods with miser care !  
 Time but th' impression stronger makes,  
 As streams their channels deeper wear.  
 My Mary ! dear departed shade !  
 Where is thy place of blissful rest ?  
 See'st thou thy lover lowly laid ?  
 Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast ?

#### A VISION

As I stood by yon roofless tower,<sup>1</sup>  
 Where the wa'flower scents the dewy air,  
 Where th' howlet mourns in her ivy bower,  
 An' tells the midnight moon her care.

The winds were laid, the air was still,  
 The stars they shot along the sky ;  
 The fox was howling on the hill,  
 An' the distant echoing glens reply.

The stream, adown its hazelly path,  
 Was rushing by the ruin'd wa's,  
 Hasting to join the sweeping Nith,  
 Whose distant roaring swells an' fa's.

The cauld blue north was streaming forth  
 Her lights, wi' hissing eerie din ;  
 Athort the lift they start an' shift,  
 Like fortune's favours, tint as win.

By heedless chance I turn'd mine eyes,  
 An', by the moonbeam, shook to see  
 A stern an' stalwart ghaist arise,  
 Attir'd as minstrels wont to be.

Had I a statue been o' stane,  
 His darin' look had daunted me ;  
 An' on his bonnet grav'd was plain,  
 The sacred posy—' Libertie !'

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<sup>1</sup> The ruins of Lincluden Abbey, near Dumfries.



An' frae his harp sic strains did flow,  
 Might rous'd the slumb'ring dead to hear ;  
 But oh ! it was a tale of woe,  
 As ever met a Briton's ear.

He sang wi' joy the former day,  
 He weeping wail'd his latter times ;  
 But what he said it was nae play—  
 I winna ventur't in my rhymes.

### TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH

Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower,  
 Thou'st met me in an evil hour ;  
 For I maun crush amang the stoure  
     Thy slender stem ;  
 To spare thee now is past my power,  
     Thou bonnie gem.

Alas ! it's no thy neebor sweet,  
 The bonnie lark, companion meet,  
 Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,  
     Wi' spreckled breast,  
 When upward-springing, blithe, to greet  
     The purpling east !

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north  
 Upon thy early, humble birth ;  
 Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth  
     Amid the storm ;  
 Scarce rear'd above the parent earth  
     Thy tender form.

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield,  
 High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield ;  
 But thou, beneath the random bield  
     O' clod or stane,  
 Adorns the histie stibble-field,  
     Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,  
 Thy snawie bosom sunward spread,  
 Thou lifts thy unassuming head  
     In humble guise ;  
 But now the share uptears thy bed,  
     And low thou lies !

Such is the fate of artless maid,  
 Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade !  
 By love's simplicity betray'd,  
     And guileless trust,  
 Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid  
     Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,  
 On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd !  
 Unskilful he to note the card  
     Of prudent lore,  
 Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,  
     And whelm him o'er !



Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,  
 Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,  
 By human pride or cunning driv'n  
     To misery's brink,  
 Till wretch'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,  
     He, ruin'd, sink !

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the daisy's fate,  
 That fate is thine—no distant date ;  
 Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate,  
     Full on thy bloom,  
 Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,  
     Shall be thy doom.

### IRISH POETS

#### JONATHAN SWIFT

1667-1745

JONATHAN SWIFT was born in Dublin in the year 1667, on the 30th of November. He was a posthumous child. His father having died in rather indigent circumstances, the widow and her two children were maintained for awhile by Godwin Swift, a brother of the deceased. The family was of English descent, the future poet's father having been Steward of the King's Inns, and his grandfather a clergyman of the Church of England. Three years of Jonathan's childhood were passed at Whitehaven, under the charge of a nurse, who attended to his education with great care. Indeed, on being restored to his mother's keeping, it was found that he had learned to spell with accuracy and to read the Bible with ease. At the age of six he was sent to school at Kilkenny, where he remained till, at fifteen, he entered Trinity College, Dublin. He did not distinguish himself at the University. He was diligent in the study of history and poetry, but neglected mathematics and logic almost altogether. At the end of four years he was 'ploughed' for his B.A. degree, which he only obtained by special favour after seven years of desultory study. Referring to this disgrace, Dr. Johnson says : ' It may easily be supposed he was much ashamed, and shame had its proper place in producing reformation. He resolved from that time to study eight hours a day, and continued his industry for seven years, with what improvement is sufficiently known. This part of his



story well deserves to be remembered; it may afford useful admonition and powerful encouragement to men whose abilities have been made for a time useless by their passions or pleasures, and who, having lost one part of life in idleness, are tempted to throw away the remainder in despair.'

In 1688 Swift went to stay with his mother, who was then residing at Leicester. He consulted her as to his future course in life, and she advised him to write to Sir William Temple on the subject, he being a connection of hers by marriage, living at Moor Park, in Surrey. Sir William took him into his household for two years, during which time he did much to improve his mind, though he did not altogether enjoy the subordinate offices which he was called upon to perform. He, however, gained the favour and confidence of his patron, and contributed in no small measure to the amusement of his leisure hours. King William III. was in the habit of visiting Sir William from time to time. In the course of these visits His Majesty made the acquaintance of Swift, and offered him a captaincy of horse. Swift, however, respectfully declined this honour, having made up his mind to take Holy Orders. Sir William employed Swift to prepare and lay before the King a series of arguments in favour of triennial Parliaments, which, however, failed to convince the royal mind. About this time Swift was first attacked by those fits of deafness and giddiness which eventually led to the loss of his reason. In 1692 he took the degree of M.A. at Oxford, but not with great distinction, and in 1694 he had a difference of opinion with Temple which led him to leave that gentleman's establishment. Temple, however, subsequently offered him the post of Deputy-Master of the Rolls in Ireland, but this office he declined. He took Holy Orders in the Church of Ireland, and was appointed Prebendary of Kilroot, in the diocese of Connor. This post, which he obtained through the influence of Lord Capel, was only worth £100 a year. At this time Sir William Temple was well stricken in years. Dr. Johnson says: 'The infirmities of the old gentleman made a companion like Swift so necessary that he invited him back, with a promise to procure him English preferment, in exchange for the prebend, which he desired him to resign. With this request Swift complied, having perhaps equally repented their separation, and they lived together in mutual satisfaction until Temple's death in 1699.' The old



baronet left Swift £100 and all his valuable manuscripts. King William promised him the next vacancy at Canterbury or Westminster, but failed to fulfil the undertaking, though Sir William's posthumous works were dedicated to him by Swift as a kind of reminder of his pledge. In fact, it is pointed out by more than one of Swift's biographers that the only benefit which he seems to have derived from his acquaintance with the august monarch was a lesson in the Dutch method of cutting and eating asparagus.

Tired of waiting for the promised preferment, Swift now accompanied the Earl Berkeley, as chaplain and private secretary, on that nobleman's appointment to the office of Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. He was 'tricked' out of the secretaryship, on the plea that it was an unsuitable post for a clergyman, but received afterwards the Rectory of Agher, and the Vicarages of Laracor and Rathbeggan. He lived at Laracor until 1710, performing the duties of his office in an exemplary manner. Earl Berkeley had promised him the Deanery of Derry, but this promise was not destined to be fulfilled. Periodical visits were paid to England, where he was a great favourite amongst the leading members of the Whig party, and the friend of Halifax, Addison, Somers, and other leaders of letters and politics. But he was destined soon to break with the Whig party and join the Tory ranks. It may now be mentioned that Swift had undoubtedly spoiled his chance of high preferment in England by his *Tale of a Tub*, which, though one of the works which stamp him as an English classic of the first rank, incurred so much disfavour that Sharp, Archbishop of York, warned the Queen against the promotion of its author. The Duchess of Somerset, too, whom Swift had 'lampooned in a manner that the meekest of her sex could not forgive,' proved a powerful enemy.

Kept out of a bishopric by such means, he was at length appointed, much against his wish, to the Deanery of St. Patrick's, Dublin, in 1713. He was more useful to the Tories than he had been to the Whigs, and Harley and Bolingbroke, then at the head of affairs, were glad to acknowledge the value of his caustic pen. The following year he published his *Public Spirit of the Whigs*, a production 'which evinced so much contempt of the Scottish nation that the peers of that country went in a body to demand reparation, and a prosecution was with great difficulty avoided.' He was hastily recalled the same year from his deanery, to which



he had repaired to take possession, by the violent dissensions between Harley and Bolingbroke, whom he tried in vain to reconcile. The death of the Queen, which soon followed, put an end to their power and Swift's prospects, and the latter returned to Dublin, where he 'introduced a meritorious reform into the chapter of St. Patrick's, over which he obtained an authority never before possessed in his station.'

'While residing in Temple's house,' says Mr. Shaw, 'he became acquainted with Esther Johnson, a beautiful young girl brought up as a dependent in the house, and who, though passing for the daughter of Sir William's steward, appears really to have been a natural child of the old diplomatist. To her, while hardly in her teens, Swift gave instruction; and the bond between master and pupil ripened into the deepest and tenderest passion on the part of the maiden, and as much attachment on that of the former as the proud and bitter nature of Swift was capable of feeling. On his removal to Ireland Swift induced Stella—such was the poetical name he gave her—to settle with her friend Mrs. Dingley in that country, where he maintained with both of them—though Mrs. Dingley was a mere mask to save appearances—that long, curious, and intimate correspondence which has since been published as his *Journal to Stella*. . . . During one of his visits to London Swift became intimate with the family of a rich merchant named Vanhomrigh, over whose daughter Hester, to whom he gave the name of Vanessa, he exercised the same kind of enchantment as he had over Stella.' Mr. Shaw, who gives as clear and succinct an account as any extant of this romantic but scarcely creditable state of things, goes on to say that Vanessa threw herself at Swift's feet and declared her unconquerable love for him, and even came to Ireland, where she resided at Celbridge, and received visits from him. She also wrote to Stella for an explanation, but Swift intercepted the letter, brought it back to her, throwing it down 'without a word, but with a terrible countenance,' before the writer, who died a few weeks afterwards (in 1723) of a broken heart. Stella died in 1728. Though Mr. Shaw is of opinion that 'the evidence breaks down upon examination,' it is only fair to state that Sir Walter Scott, Lord Macaulay, and other biographers allege that Swift was secretly married to Stella by Dr. Ashe, Bishop of Clogher, in 1716, and some go so far as to say that it was the discovery of this fact



which led to the death of Vanessa. But at best the matter must still be accounted an unsolved mystery, in spite of a careful investigation by Mr. Churton Collins.

On the death of George I., the Dean of St. Patrick's paid his court to the new King and Queen. Some of his most striking poems were written about this time, including the curious *Verses on his own Death*. In 1736 he had a very severe attack of deafness and giddiness, which caused him to abandon serious work. His mind began to give way, and a gradual abolition of reason settled into absolute idiocy in 1742. Though some glimmerings of reason appeared afterwards at distant intervals, he remained in this pitiable state until, in October, 1745, he passed painlessly away. He lies buried in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, and over his grave is an epitaph which he composed himself. These are some of his lines on his own death :

Why do we grieve that friends should die ?  
No loss more easy to supply.  
One year's past : a different scene !  
No further mention of the Dean,  
Who now, alas ! no more is miss'd,  
Than if he never did exist.

Swift, though a great man, is hardly to be accounted a great poet. Dryden, on reading some of his Pindaric odes, remarked to him, 'Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet.' His works in verse consist of songs, satires, lampoons, and occasional comic pieces, all brilliant, fluent, and elegant, abounding in the happiest characteristics of style. 'All his verses,' says Dr. Johnson, 'exemplify his own definition of a good style—they consist of "proper words in their proper places."' It is pre-eminently as the author of *Gulliver's Travels* that Swift takes rank as one of the greatest writers of English prose. Had that great masterpiece never appeared, his name would not occupy so prominent a place as it now does in the annals of English literature. Still, 'his poetical works will give him a prominent place among the writers of his age. They are, however, most strongly contrasted in their style and manner to the type most prevalent at the time, and of which Pope is the most complete representative. They have no pretension to loftiness of language, are written in the *sermo pedestris*, in a tone studiously preserving the familiar expression of common life. In nearly all of them Swift adopted the short octosyllabic verse that Prior and Gay had rendered popular.



The poems show the same wonderful acquaintance with ordinary incidents as the prose compositions, the same intense observation of human nature, and the same profoundly misanthropic view of mankind.'

The bulk of Swift's fortune was left to a hospital for lunatics, a provision which he had announced in his lines on his own death:

To show, by one satiric touch,  
No nation needed it so much.

The exact amount by which the hospital benefited was £12,000.

Of the many biographies of Swift, Sir Walter Scott's is generally admitted to be the most lenient in its criticism of his public character, and the most indulgent towards his faults as a private individual. Lord Jeffrey, on the other hand, indulged in caustic strictures and severe censure in No. 53 of the *Edinburgh Review*. Sir Walter gives the following interesting description of the Dean's appearance and character:

'Swift was in person tall, strong, and well made, of a dark complexion, but with blue eyes, black and bushy eyebrows, nose somewhat aquiline, and features which remarkably expressed the stern, haughty, and dauntless turn of his mind. He was never known to laugh, and his smiles are happily characterized by the well-known lines of Shakespeare. Indeed, the whole description of Cassius might be applied to Swift:

"He reads much,  
He is a great observer, and he looks  
Quite through the deeds of men.  
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort  
As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit  
That could be moved to smile at anything."

'His manners in society were, in his better days, free, lively, and engaging, not devoid of peculiarities, but bending them so well to circumstances that his company was universally courted.' His reputation as a wit is well known. His facility in jest and repartee was very remarkable. But it is not so generally known that he was extremely generous, and that he instituted a benevolent fund with the first £500 that he could call his own. This took the form of a fund for granting small loans to such industrious artisans and tradesmen as could find security for the repayment of the money by small weekly instalments, but insisting upon punctuality in these repayments, without which the funds must soon have been exhausted.



Scott, in his review of Swift's literary merits, has pointed out that he excelled in three remarkable peculiarities—namely, originality, indifference to literary fame, and superiority in every style of composition that he attempted, with the exception of history. Hazlitt has praised him highly for his wit and humour in his *Lectures on the English Poets*. Dr. Johnson, though severe and somewhat prejudiced, is eulogistic about the purity of his style :

‘In his works he has given very different specimens both of sentiment and expression. His *Tale of a Tub* has little resemblance to his other pieces. It exhibits a vehemence and rapidity of mind, a copiousness of images, and vivacity of diction, such as he afterwards never possessed or never exerted. It is of a mode so distinct and peculiar that it must be considered by itself ; what is true of that is not true of anything else that he has written. . . . He studied purity ; and though perhaps all his strictures are not exact, yet it is not often that solecisms can be found ; and whoever depends on his authority may generally conclude himself safe. . . . His style was well suited to his thoughts, which are never subtilized by nice disquisitions, decorated by sparkling conceits, elevated by ambitious sentences, or variegated by far-sought learning. He pays no court to the passions ; he excites neither surprise nor admiration ; he always understands himself, and his readers always understand him.’ And yet it cannot be forgotten that this great writer sometimes ‘ neglected both the decency due to his station as a clergyman and a gentleman, and his credit as a man of literature. In poems of a coarse and indelicate description, his imagination dwelt upon filthy and disgusting subjects, and his ready talents were employed to embody its impurities in humorous and familiar verse.’

When it became known that Swift was dead, the gratitude of the Irish showed itself, Sir Walter tells us, in the full glow of national enthusiasm. Young and old of all ranks surrounded the house. Locks of his hair were so eagerly asked for that Sheridan has happily quoted the lines of Shakespeare in connection with the scene :

Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,  
And dying mention it within their wills,  
Bequeathing it as a rich legacy  
Unto their issue.



## A DESCRIPTION OF A CITY SHOWER

Careful observers may foretell the hour  
 (By sure prognostics) when to dread a shower :  
 While rain depends, the pensive cat gives o'er  
 Her frolics, and pursues her tail no more.

\* \* \* \* \*

Meanwhile the south, rising with dappled wings,  
 A sable cloud athwart the welkin flings,  
 That swill'd more liquor than it could contain,  
 And, like a drunkard, gives it up again.  
 Brisk Susan whips her linen from the rope,  
 While the first drizzling shower is borne aslope ;  
 Such is that sprinkling, which some careless quean  
 Flirts on you from her mop—but not so clean :  
 You fly, invoke the gods ; then turning, stop  
 To rail ; she, singing, still whirls on her mop.  
 Not yet the dust had shunn'd the unequal strife,  
 But, aided by the wind, fought still for life,  
 And wafted with its foe by violent gust,  
 'Twas doubtful which was rain, and which was dust.  
 Ah ! where must needy poet seek for aid,  
 When dust and rain at once his coat invade ?  
 Sole coat, where dust cemented by the rain  
 Erects the nap, and leaves a cloudy stain !

Now in contiguous drops the flood comes down,  
 Threatening with deluge this devoted town.  
 To shops in crowds the daggled females fly,  
 Pretend to cheapen goods, but nothing buy.  
 The Templar spruce, while every spout's a-broach,  
 Stays till 'tis fair, yet seems to call a coach.  
 The tucked-up sempstress walks with hasty strides,  
 While streams run down her oil'd umbrella's sides.  
 Here various kinds, by various fortunes led,  
 Commence acquaintance underneath a shed.  
 Triumphant Tories and desponding Whigs  
 Forget their feuds, and join to save their wigs.  
 Box'd in a chair the beau impatient sits,  
 While spouts run clattering o'er the roof by fits ;  
 And ever and anon with frightful din  
 The leather sounds ; he trembles from within.  
 So when Troy chairmen bore the wooden steed,  
 Pregnant with Greeks impatient to be freed,  
 (Those bully Greeks, who, as the moderns do,  
 Instead of paying chairmen, run them through),  
 Laocoon struck the outside with his spear,  
 And each imprisoned hero quaked for fear.

Now from all parts the swelling kennels flow,  
 And bear their trophies with them as they go ;  
 Filths of all hues and odours seem to tell  
 What street they sailed from by their sight and smell.  
 They, as each torrent drives, with rapid force,  
 From Smithfield or St. 'Pulchre's shape their course,  
 And in huge confluence joined at Snowhill ridge,  
 Fall from the conduit prone to Holborn Bridge.  
 Sweepings from butcher's stalls, dung, guts, and blood,  
 Drowned puppies, stinking sprats, all drenched in mud,  
 Dead cats, and turnip-tops, come tumbling down the flood.



## A DESCRIPTION OF MORNING IN LONDON

Now hardly here and there a hackney-coach  
 Appearing show'd the ruddy morn's approach.  
 The slipshod 'prentice from his master's door  
 Had pared the dirt, and sprinkled round the floor.  
 Now Moll had whirl'd her mop with dexterous airs,  
 Prepared to scrub the entry and the stairs.  
 The youth with broomy stumps began to trace  
 The kennel's edge, where wheels had worn the place.  
 The small-coal man was heard with cadence deep,  
 Till drown'd in shriller notes of chimney-sweep ;  
 Duns at his lordship's gate began to meet ;  
 And brick-dust Moll had scream'd through half the street.  
 The turnkey now his flock returning sees,  
 Duly let out a-nights to steal for fees ;  
 The watchful bailiffs take their silent stands,  
 And school-boys lag with satchels in their hands.

## OLIVER GOLDSMITH

1728-1774

ALL critics are agreed that Oliver Goldsmith, whether regarded as a writer of prose or of poetry (and he was equally skilful at both), was one of the most pleasing authors of the eighteenth century. Some even go further, and call him one of the greatest, while Mr. Shaw at least refers to him as the most charming and versatile of the writers of his time. He was born at the village of Pallas,<sup>1</sup> in the county of Longford, in November, 1728. That part of the world was then, Lord Macaulay tells us, almost as remote, for all practical purposes, from the busy and splendid capital in which his later years were passed as any clearing in Upper Canada or any sheep-walk in Australasia now is. Even in the day when Macaulay wrote his biographical sketch of Goldsmith he could say, 'Those enthusiasts who venture to make a pilgrimage to the birthplace of the poet are forced to perform the latter part of their journey on foot. The hamlet lies far from any highroad, on a dreary plain which, in wet weather, is often a lake. The lanes would break any jaunting-car to pieces, and there are ruts and sloughs through which the most strongly-built wheels

<sup>1</sup> It has been contended that his real birthplace was Smith-Hill House, Elphin, the residence of his grandfather, the Rev. Oliver Jones, when his mother was on a visit. This is the opinion of Dr. M. F. Cox, but it is not generally accepted as correct.



cannot be dragged.' Macaulay, like Thackeray, is perhaps a little prone to exaggerate when speaking of the Emerald Isle, but there can be no question that the hamlet was remote from the busier haunts of men.

Oliver's father was a curate with a very small stipend, and was obliged to farm some land in order to bring up his rather large family. While the future poet was still a child, Mr. Goldsmith was presented to a living worth £200 a year, or thereabouts, in the county of Westmeath. Upon this change in their fortunes, the family removed from their isolated dwelling to a more comfortable house on a frequented road, not far from the village of Lissoy. Here he was taught his letters first by a maidservant, but in his seventh year he was sent to the village school, which was kept by a man who had been a quartermaster in the time of Queen Anne. The old man was a marvel in his way, possessing considerable ability, a great fund of humour, and an inexhaustible store of amusing anecdotes. His romantic tales are said to have been in a measure accountable for the roving spirit which developed itself in his pupil Oliver Goldsmith in after-years. The poet has portrayed, with unique and unequalled excellence, the character of this worthy man in *The Deserted Village*. Ghosts, fairies, banshees, and many other creatures of the imagination, figured in the stories which little Oliver heard in the intervals of more serious and edifying business. From this academy he was removed, at the age of nine, to a school at Elphin, under the Rev. Mr. Griffin, thence to Athlone, and thence, again, to Edgeworthstown, where he was placed under the care of the Rev. Patrick Hughes, to whose able and careful teaching he afterwards acknowledged himself to be largely indebted. Wherever Oliver went he was made a butt of by his playmates. 'His life,' we are told, 'at this time seems to have been far from happy. He had, as appears from the admirable portrait of him at Knowle, features harsh even to ugliness. The small-pox had set its mark on him with more than usual severity. His stature was small, and his limbs ill put together. Among boys little tenderness is shown to personal defects; and the ridicule excited by poor Oliver's appearance was heightened by a peculiar simplicity and a disposition to blunder which he retained to the last. He became the common butt of boys and masters, was pointed at as a fright in the playground, and flogged as a dunce in the school-



room. When he had risen to eminence, those who had once derided him ransacked their memory for the events of his early years, and recited repartees and couplets which had dropped from him, and which, though little noticed at the time, were supposed, a quarter of a century later, to indicate the powers which produced *The Vicar of Wakefield* and *The Deserted Village*.'

By the aid of Mr. Contarine, a benevolent uncle, Oliver was enabled to enter Trinity College, Dublin, in the seventeenth year of his age. He entered as a sizar, a position which entitled him to food and tuition free and lodgings at a nominal charge. In those days the sizars had to perform some menial offices which are happily not now demanded of them. They swept the college courts, carried up the dinner to the Fellows' table, changed the plates, and poured out the ale.

Goldsmith was foolish enough to neglect almost entirely the opportunities which residence at the University placed within his reach. He was low down in the examination lists, idle and even stupid in the lecture-rooms, and so frivolous that he was severely flogged by a brutal tutor named Wilder, under whose care he had been placed as a student. Occasionally he worked well, and he obtained one of the exhibitions on the foundation of Erasmus Smith, but he did not obtain his degree of B.A. until two years after the usual time.

While Oliver was wasting his time at Dublin his father died, leaving but little money behind him. For a short while after taking his degree the poet resided with his widowed mother. He now began to think of a profession. Amongst others, he made an unsuccessful attempt to obtain Holy Orders, the story of his having been turned away from the bishop's palace on account of his glaring red clothing being too familiar to call for more than a passing reference here. From failure to failure, from squalor to squalor he went, until we find him at Leyden University, pretending to study medicine. With nothing but a flute in addition to the clothes he wore, he left that seat of learning, and travelled on foot through Holland, France, Germany, and as far as Padua, where he said he obtained a medical degree, though the proof of this statement is not forthcoming. He supported himself through Germany and Flanders by means of his performances on the German flute, which he played fairly well, but the Italians did not care for his music, and so he was reduced to begging at the



gates of monasteries and convents. He is said to have told a 'story' about his having been present at a very interesting conversation between Voltaire and Fontenelle, stating that the interview took place in Paris. But Lord Macaulay assures us that it is certain Voltaire never was within a hundred leagues of Paris during the whole time of Goldsmith's wanderings on the Continent.

The death of his uncle induced him to return to England, and he reached Dover in 1756, absolutely friendless and entirely destitute. Mr. Prior, one of his many biographers, records the fact that 'a poor chemist at last took compassion on him, and for a short time the author of *The Traveller* was too happy to earn his bread by spreading plasters and pounding in his mortar.' But soon a change in his fortunes made life smoother for him for awhile, though not by any means roseate. Dr. Sleigh, an old college friend, gave him a start in life as a physician and surgeon. But he did not gain ground, somehow. After unsuccessful attempts to obtain appointments, first in the East India Company's Service, and then in a naval hospital, he took lodging in a wretched garret in Fleet Street, and settled down to work as a literary drudge, 'writing to order, and at a moment's notice, schoolbooks, tales for children, prefaces, indexes, and reviews of books; and contributing to the *Monthly*, *Critical*, and *Lady's Review*, the *British Magazine*, and other periodicals.' In course of time he became acquainted with Dr. Johnson, Reynolds, and Burke, and in 1763 he was one of the nine original members of that confraternity which is still known to fame as 'The Club.'

The well-known saying of Buffon, '*Le style est l'homme*,' is admirably and fully exemplified in the writings of Oliver Goldsmith. 'A guileless good nature, a kind and tender love for all his human brotherhood, a gay, unthinking hopefulness shine clearly out from every page he wrote.'

It is not possible to say with certainty when this illustrious author first 'appeared in print.' Dr. Collier tells us that it was from the top room of No. 35, Trinity College, that his first literary performances emanated. These took the form of street ballads, which he sold for five shillings each. It is further told that he used to steal out at nights to hear them sung, and watch the ready sale which they commanded in the dimly-lighted streets of the Irish capital. Seldom did the five shillings come home



intact. Many a time was it shared with a beggar on the way.

Long after the days of 'the top room of No. 35' had passed away, Goldsmith was writing hard in a garret in Green Arbour Court, his apartment being reached by the now historic staircase known as Breakneck Steps. We must pass over his multifarious prose writings, and come to his poems. In 1764 the beautiful poem entitled *The Traveller* made its author suddenly famous. From the first it created a great impression. Dr. Johnson read it through with admiration, and said it would not be easy to find anything to equal it since the death of Pope, and the sister of Reynolds, the great painter, after hearing the poem read aloud, declared that she would never again look upon Dr. Goldsmith as ugly. From this time the poet's career was one of unbroken literary success. *The Deserted Village* appeared in 1770 as a companion poem to *The Traveller*, written in a like style, and with the same literary charm and finish. These two poems will always stand in the front rank of sentimental and descriptive verse. As long as the world lasts men and women will accord to sweet Auburn the title which the poet has conferred on it—that of 'loveliest village of the plain.' Vivid, touching, musical, natural, picturesque—these are adjectives which may be fairly applied to either or both of them. They were and are valued, not merely for their peculiar smoothness and general poetical charm, but for their morality, their piety, and the elevating principles which they uphold with respect to the organization of society. It is the opinion of some critics that *The Deserted Village* is the most finished work which its author produced. Two years were spent in preparing it for the press. A little incident which reflects equal credit on author and publisher is told in connection with its issue. The publisher, appreciating its superior merits, gave Goldsmith a hundred guineas for the copyright. The poet returned it, saying, 'It is too much; it is more than the honest bookseller can afford, or, indeed, any modern poetry is worth.' The sale was so large that the bookseller afterwards insisted on the author accepting the original sum. But the history of Goldsmith abounds in touching anecdotes like this.

In his declining years the poet suffered from a constitutional disease, brought on partly by literary labours. Depression of spirits followed, and eventually an attack of nervous fever brought



this brilliant if eccentric life to an end on the 4th of April, 1774, in his forty-sixth year. At first it was determined to bury him in Westminster Abbey, but this resolve was abandoned, and he was laid to rest in the Temple burial-ground. His name is perpetuated, however, in the Poets' Corner by means of a marble monument.

From the numerous criticisms on Goldsmith's genius which are within the reach of any student, we will quote but three short extracts. 'Goldsmith,' says Hazlitt, 'was one of the most delightful writers in the language. His verse flows like a limpid stream. His ease is quite unconscious. Everything in him is spontaneous, unstudied, unaffected, yet elegant, harmonious, graceful, nearly faultless. Without the point or refinement of Pope, he has more natural tenderness, a greater suavity of manner, a more genial spirit. He never rises into sublimity, and seldom sinks into insipidity, or stumbles upon coarseness.' And just a word or two from Campbell's masterly criticism. 'Goldsmith's poetry,' he says, 'enjoys a calm and steady popularity. It inspires us, indeed, with no admiration of daring design or of fertile invention, but it presents within its narrow limits a distinct and unbroken view of poetical delightfulness. . . . His whole manner has a still depth of feeling and reflection, which gives back the image of nature unruffled and minutely. . . . His chaste pathos makes him an insinuating moralist, and throws a charm of Claude-like softness over his descriptions of homely objects that would seem only fit to be the subjects of Dutch painting. But his quiet enthusiasm leads the affections to humble things without a vulgar association, and he inspires us with a fondness to trace the simplest recollections of Auburn, till we count the furniture of its ale-house, and listen to the "varnished clock that ticked behind the door."'

More recently we have the eulogy of Mr. Austin Dobson: 'His position in letters is undoubtedly high. As an essayist he ranks with the best; as a poet, he produced some of the most enduring works of his generation; he wrote a novel of which the reputation is cosmopolitan; and, of his two plays, one is not only a masterpiece, but a masterpiece which modern managers still find a charm to conjure with. Had we known no more of him than this, we might have invested him with almost any characteristics and qualities.'



## A HISTORY OF BRITISH POETRY

FROM 'THE DESERTED VILLAGE'<sup>1</sup>

Sweet Auburn ! loveliest village of the plain,  
 Where health and plenty cheered the labouring swain,  
 Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,  
 And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed :  
 Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,  
 Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,  
 How often have I loitered o'er thy green,  
 Where humble happiness endeared each scene !  
 How often have I paused on every charm,  
 The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,  
 The never-failing brook, the busy mill,  
 The decent church that topt the neighbouring hill,  
 The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,  
 For talking age and whispering lovers made !  
 How often have I blest the coming day,  
 When toil remitting lent its turn to play,  
 And all the village train, from labour free,  
 Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,  
 While many a pastime circled in the shade,  
 The young contending as the old surveyed ;  
 And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,  
 And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.  
 And still as each repeated pleasure tired,  
 Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired ;  
 The dancing pair that simply sought renown,  
 By holding out to tire each other down ;  
 The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,  
 While secret laughter tittered round the place ;  
 The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,  
 The matron's glance that would those looks reprove.  
 These were thy charms, sweet village ! sports like these,  
 With sweet succession, taught ev'n toil to please ;  
 These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed,  
 These were thy charms—but all these charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,  
 Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn ;  
 Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,  
 And desolation saddens all thy green :  
 One only master grasps the whole domain,  
 And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain ;  
 No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,  
 But, choked with sedges, works its weary way ;  
 Along thy glades, a solitary guest,  
 The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest ;  
 Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,  
 And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.  
 Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,  
 And the long grass o'ertops the mould'ring wall,  
 And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,  
 Far, far away, thy children leave the land.

Ill fares the land, to hast'ning ills a prey,  
 Where wealth accumulates, and men decay :  
 Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade ;  
 A breath can make them, as a breath has made :  
 But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
 When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

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<sup>1</sup> Dedicated to Sir Joshua Reynolds.



A time there was, ere England's griefs began,  
 When every rood of ground maintained its man ;  
 For him light labour spread her wholesome store,  
 Just gave what life required, but gave no more :  
 His best companions, innocence and health ;  
 And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are altered ; trade's unfeeling train  
 Usurp the land and dispossess the swain ;  
 Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose,  
 Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose !  
 And every want to luxury allied,  
 And every pang that folly pays to pride.  
 Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,  
 Those calm desires that asked but little room,  
 Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,  
 Lived in each look, and brightened all the green ;  
 These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,  
 And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn ! parent of the blissful hour,  
 Thy glades forlorn confess the tryant's power.  
 Here, as I take my solitary rounds,  
 Amidst thy tangling walks, and ruined grounds,  
 And, many a year elapsed, return to view  
 Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew  
 Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,  
 Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care,  
 In all my griefs—and God has given my share—  
 I still had hopes my latest hours to crown,  
 Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down ;  
 To husband out life's taper at the close,  
 And keep the flame from wasting by repose :  
 I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,  
 Amidst the swains to show my book-learned skill,  
 Around my fire an evening group to draw,  
 And tell of all I felt, and all I saw ;  
 And, as an hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,  
 Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,  
 I still had hopes, my long vexations past,  
 Here to return—and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,  
 Retreats from care, that never must be mine,  
 How blest is he who crowns, in shades like these,  
 A youth of labour with an age of ease ;  
 Who quits a world where strong temptations try,  
 And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly !  
 For him no wretches, born to work and weep,  
 Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep ;  
 No surly porter stands in guilty state,  
 To spurn imploring famine from the gate ;  
 But on he moves to meet his latter end,  
 Angels around befriending virtue's friend :  
 Sinks to the grave with unperceived decay,  
 While resignation gently slopes the way ;  
 And, all his prospects brightening to the last,  
 His heaven commences ere the world be past !



Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close  
 Up yonder hill the village murmur rose ;  
 There, as I passed, with careless steps and slow,  
 The mingling notes came softened from below ;  
 The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,  
 The sober herd that lowed to meet their young ;  
 The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,  
 The playful children just let loose from school ;  
 The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,  
 And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind ;  
 These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,  
 And filled each pause the nightingale had made.  
 But now the sounds of population fail,  
 No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,  
 No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,  
 For all the blooming flush of life is fled.  
 All but yon widowed, solitary thing,  
 That feebly bends beside the plashy spring ;  
 She, wretched matron, forced in age for bread  
 To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,  
 To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,  
 To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn ;  
 She only left of all the harmless train,  
 The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,  
 And still where many a garden flower grows wild ;  
 There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,  
 The village preacher's modest mansion rose.  
 A man he was to all the country dear,  
 And passing rich with forty pounds a year ;  
 Remote from towns he ran his godly race,  
 Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change his place ;  
 Unskilful he to fawn, or seek for power,  
 By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour ;  
 Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,  
 More bent to raise the wretched than to rise.  
 His house was known to all the vagrant train,  
 He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain ;  
 The long remembered beggar was his guest,  
 Whose beard descending swept his aged breast ;  
 The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,  
 Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed ;  
 The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,  
 Sat by his fire, and talked the night away ;  
 Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,  
 Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won.  
 Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,  
 And quite forgot their vices in their woe ;  
 Careless their merits or their faults to scan,  
 His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,  
 And even his failings leaned to virtue's side ;  
 But in his duty prompt at every call,  
 He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all.  
 And, as a bird each fond endearment tries,  
 To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,  
 He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,  
 Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.



Beside the bed where parting life was laid,  
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismayed,  
The reverend champion stood. At his control,  
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul ;  
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,  
And his last faltering accents whispered praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,  
His looks adorned the venerable place ;  
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,  
And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray.  
The service past, around the pious man,  
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran ;  
Even children followed with endearing wile,  
And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile.  
His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest,  
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distrest ;  
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,  
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.

## THE GIFT

TO IRIS, IN BOW STREET, COVENT GARDEN<sup>1</sup>

Say, cruel Iris, pretty rake,  
Dear mercenary beauty,  
What annual offering shall I make,  
Expressive of my duty ?

My heart, a victim to thine eyes,  
Should I at once deliver,  
Say, would the angry fair one prize  
The gift, who slights the giver ?

A bill, a jewel, watch, or toy,  
My rivals give—and let 'em ;  
If gems or gold impart a joy,  
I'll give them—when I get 'em.

I'll give—but not the full-blown rose,  
Or rose-bud, more in fashion ;  
Such short-lived offerings but disclose  
A transitory passion.

I'll give thee something yet unpaid,  
Not less sincere than civil ;  
I'll give thee—ah ! too charming maid,  
I'll give thee—to the devil.<sup>2</sup>

## ÉTRENNES À IRIS

Pour témoigner de ma flamme,  
Iris, du meilleur de mon âme,  
Je vous donne à ce nouvel an  
Non pas dentelle, ni ruban,  
Non pas essence, ni pommade,  
Quelques boîtes de marmelade,  
Un manchon, des gants, un  
bouquet,  
Non pas heures, ni chapelet,  
Quoi donc ? attendez, je vous  
donne  
O ! fille plus belle que bonne,

Qui m'avez toujours refusé,  
Le point si souvent proposé,  
Je vous donne—Ah ! le puis-je  
dire ?  
Oui : c'est trop souffrir le martyre,  
Il est temps de s'émanciper,  
Patience va m'échapper.  
Fussiez-vous cent fois plus aim-  
able  
Belle Iris, je vous donne . . . au  
Diable.

<sup>1</sup> First printed in *The Bee*, 1759, p. 50.<sup>2</sup> The original of this poem is in the *Ménagiana*.



## ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF A MAD DOG

Good people all, of every sort,  
 Give ear unto my song ;  
 And if you find it wondrous short,  
 It cannot hold you long.

In Islington there was a man,  
 Of whom the world might say,  
 That still a godly race he ran,—  
 Whene'er he went to pray.

A kind and gentle heart he had,  
 To comfort friends and foes ;  
 The naked every day he clad,—  
 When he put on his clothes.

And in that town a dog was found,  
 As many dogs there be,  
 Both mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound,  
 And curs of low degree.

This dog and man at first were friends ;  
 But when a pique began,  
 The dog, to gain his private ends,  
 Went mad, and bit the man.

Around from all the neighbouring streets  
 The wondering neighbours ran,  
 And swore the dog had lost his wits,  
 To bite so good a man.

The wound it seemed both sore and sad,  
 To every Christian eye ;  
 And while they swore the dog was mad,  
 They swore the man would die.

But soon a wonder came to light,  
 That showed the rogues they lied ;  
 The man recovered of the bite.  
 The dog it was that died.

## STANZAS ON WOMAN

When lovely Woman stoops to folly,  
 And finds too late that men betray,  
 What charm can soothe her melancholy,  
 What art can wash her guilt away ?

The only art her guilt to cover,  
 To hide her shame from every eye,  
 To give repentance to her lover,  
 And wring his bosom—is, to die.



## A DESCRIPTION OF AN AUTHOR'S BEDCHAMBER

Where the Red Lion, staring o'er the way,  
 Invites each passing stranger that can pay ;  
 Where Calvert's butt, and Parson's black champaign,  
 Regale the drabs and bloods of Drury-lane ;  
 There in a lonely room, from bailiffs snug,  
 The Muse found Scroggen stretched beneath a rug ;  
 A window, patched with paper, lent a ray,  
 That dimly showed the state in which he lay ;  
 The sanded floor that grits beneath the tread ;  
 The humid wall with paltry pictures spread :  
 The royal game of goose was there in view,  
 And the twelve rules the royal martyr drew ;  
 The seasons, framed with listing, found a place,  
 And brave Prince William showed his lamp-black face :  
 The morn was cold, he views with keen desire  
 The rusty grate unconscious of a fire :  
 With beer and milk arrears the frieze was scored,  
 And five cracked teacups dressed the chimney-board ;  
 A night-cap decked his brows instead of bay,  
 A cap by night—a stocking all the day !

STANZAS ON THE TAKING OF QUEBEC<sup>1</sup>

Amidst the clamour of exulting joys,  
 Which triumph forces from the patriot heart,  
 Grief dares to mingle her soul-piercing voice,  
 And quells the raptures which from pleasures start.

O Wolfe ! to thee a streaming flood of woe,  
 Sighing we pay, and think e'en conquest dear ;  
 Quebec in vain shall teach our breast to glow,  
 Whilst thy sad fate extorts the heart-wrung tear.

Alive, the foe thy dreadful vigour fled,  
 And saw thee fall with joy-pronouncing eyes :  
 Yet they shall know thou conquerest, though dead !  
 Since from thy tomb a thousand heroes rise.

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<sup>1</sup> First printed in the *Busy Body* for October 22, 1759.



## FROM 'THE TRAVELLER ; OR, A PROSPECT OF SOCIETY'

Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow,  
 Or by the lazy Scheld, or wandering Po ;  
 Or onward, where the rude Carinthian boor  
 Against the houseless stranger shuts the door ;  
 Or where Campania's plain forsaken lies,  
 A weary waste expanding to the skies ;  
 Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,  
 My heart untravell'd fondly turns to thee :  
 Still to my brother turns, with ceaseless pain,  
 And drags at each remove a lengthening chain.

Eternal blessings crown my earliest friend,  
 And round his dwelling guardian saints attend ;  
 Blest be that spot, where cheerful guests retire  
 To pause from toil, and trim their evening fire ;  
 Blest that abode, where want and pain repair,  
 And every stranger finds a ready chair :  
 Blest be those feasts with simple plenty crowned,  
 Where all the ruddy family around  
 Laugh at the jests or pranks that never fail,  
 Or sigh with pity at some mournful tale ;  
 Or press the bashful stranger to his food,  
 And learn the luxury of doing good.

But me, not destined such delights to share.  
 My prime of life in wandering spent and care :  
 Impelled with steps unceasing, to pursue  
 Some fleeting good, that mocks me with the view ;  
 That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,  
 Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies ;  
 My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,  
 And find no spot of all the world my own.

Ev'n now, where Alpine solitudes ascend,  
 I sit me down a pensive hour to spend ;  
 And, placed on high above the storm's career,  
 Look downward where an hundred realms appear ;  
 Lakes, forests, cities, plains, extending wide,  
 The pomp of kings, the shepherd's humbler pride.



## MINOR POETS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

### ENGLISH POETS

*Elijah Fenton* (1683-1730) was a 'respectable contemporary poet' of Alexander Pope. In conjunction with William Broome, he assisted the greater poet in his great translation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. But he was the author of some poetical works which have gained for him an independent reputation in the annals of literature. A volume of poems from his pen appeared in 1717, and in 1723 he published a tragedy which brought him in £1,500. This work is entitled *Mariamne*. He also wrote a Pindaric ode, which he dedicated to Lord Gower, and which was much admired by Pope. Fenton edited and annotated the works of Waller in 1729. He was a B.A. of Jesus College, Cambridge.

*The Rev. William Broome* (1689-1745) was born at Haslington, in the county of Chester. He was educated at Jesus College, Cambridge, where he graduated M.A. in the year 1716. He took Holy Orders, and eventually became Rector of Pulham, in Norfolk. He published a volume of poems in 1739. He helped Pope in his Homeric translations, and his work as a translator is superior to his efforts as an original poet.

*The Rev. James Bramston* (1694-1744), a contributor to Dodsley's *Collection*, was educated at Westminster School and at Christ Church, Oxford, of which college he was admitted a student in 1713. He took Holy Orders, and became Vicar of Harting, Sussex, in 1725. His chief works are *The Art of Politics*, published in 1729, and *The Man of Taste*, published in 1731.



The former is an imitation of *The Art of Poetry*, by Horace. *The Man of Taste* was, he tells us, occasioned by Pope's epistle on that subject. Bramston was also the author of an imitation of *The Splendid Shilling* (by Philips), entitled *The Crooked Sixpence*. The following lines are from *The Man of Taste* :

Swift's whims and jokes for my resentment call,  
 For he displeases me that pleases all.  
 Verse without rhyme I never could endure,  
 Uncouth in numbers, and in sense obscure.

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*

Rhyme binds and beautifies the poet's lays,  
 As London ladies owe their shape to stays.

*Henry Carey* (died in 1743) is now chiefly remembered as the author of one of the most popular ballads in the English language. Few songs of its kind have been sung so frequently at concerts of every sort and size as that entitled *Sally in our Alley*. It is a classical lyric, and it is worthy of note that the music is also by Carey. He gives the following account of the origin of the ballad, and the incidents which led to its composition : ' A shoemaker's apprentice making holiday with his sweetheart, treated her with a sight of Bedlam, the puppet-shows, the flying chairs, and all the elegancies of Moorfields : from whence, proceeding to the Farthing Piehouse, he gave her a collation of buns, cheese-cakes, gammon of bacon, stuffed beef, and bottled ale ; through all which scenes the author dodged them (charmed with the simplicity of their courtship), from whence he drew this little sketch of nature.' Addison is said to have admired the song.

Carey was also the author of other songs, and of several dramatic pieces, two of which were *Chrononhotonthologos* and *The Dragon of Wantley*. The former was issued in 1734, and the latter in 1737. These were very favourably received.

*Matthew Green* (1696-1737) was a clerk in the Custom House, and originally a Dissenter. He changed his faith, however, on account of the narrowness and austerity of his parents. He was subject to constantly recurring fits of depression, a malady which undoubtedly led him to compose his poem entitled *The Spleen*, which was greatly admired in his day, and was honoured by the praises of Pope and Gray. It was first published by Richard



Glover, the author of *Leonidas*. We quote some lines of the poem which, though now hardly remembered, is a melodious and powerful one :

To cure the mind's wrong bias, spleen,  
Some recommend the bowling-green ;  
Some hilly walks ; all exercise ;  
Fling but a stone, the giant dies ;  
Laugh and be well. Monkeys have been  
Extreme good doctors for the spleen ;  
And kitten, if the humour hit,  
Has harlequined away the fit.

*Isaac Hawkins Browne* (1706-1760) was for awhile Member of Parliament for the division of Wenlock, in Shropshire. He was the author of a Latin poem, *De Animi Immortalitate*, and an English poem entitled *Design and Beauty*. The former is written in the style of Lucretius. But he is chiefly celebrated for a work entitled *A Pipe of Tobacco*, which contains six imitations of authors who were living at the time at which it was published. It is a remarkably clever book, and quite unique in its way. The writers parodied are Colley Cibber ; James Thomson, author of *The Seasons* ; Young, author of *Night Thoughts* ; Pope, Swift, and Ambrose Philips. What Mr. Chambers calls ' Ambrose Philips's namby-pamby ' is thus parodied :

Little tube of mighty power  
Charmer of an idle hour,  
Object of my warm desire,  
Lip of wax and eye of fire ;  
And thy snowy taper waist  
With my finger gently braced  
And thy pretty swelling crest,  
With my little stopper pressed,  
And the sweetest bliss of blisses  
Breathing from thy balmy kisses.

*Colley Cibber* (1671-1757) was a dramatic writer, who was Poet Laureate from 1730 until the time of his death in 1757. One of his plays, *The Careless Husband*, is ' still deservedly a favourite.'

*Sir Charles Hanbury Williams* (1709-1759) enjoyed great popularity as a courtier, poet, and satirist during the reign of George II. His father's name was Hanbury, but Charles changed his name to Williams on inheriting some property in Monmouthshire left to him by his godfather. He was a Member of Parliament for some time, and subsequently an Ambassador at the Russian and Prussian Courts. Nearly all his poems were written on people and



subjects connected with the age in which he wrote, and for that reason they have lost their interest. They were badly edited in 1822, when 'many gross pieces not written by the satirical poet were admitted.'

*William Somerville* (1677-1742) had a large estate in Warwickshire which brought in an income of £1,500 a year. In writing to Allan Ramsay, he describes himself as :

A squire well-born, and six foot high.

The estate was burdened with an encumbrance in the shape of an allowance of £600 a year to the poet's mother, and the remainder does not seem to have been sufficient for the open-handed squire, who died in somewhat straitened circumstances. He is chiefly remembered for his poem *The Chase*, which was published in 1735. It is written in blank verse, and is a kind of poetical handbook for votaries of the chase. It contains many fine passages, such as :

Hail, gentle Dawn ! mild, blushing goddess, hail !  
Rejoiced I see thy purple mantle spread  
O'er half the skies ; gems pave thy radiant way,  
And orient pearls from every shrub depend.

*Dr. Isaac Watts* (1674-1748) was an Independent minister whose hymns are too well known to need any special mention. Their author was born in Southampton, and was educated at a school taught by the Rev. Thomas Rowe, a Dissenting minister. The poet afterwards spent four years in the household of Sir John Hartopp. The last thirty-six years of his life were passed under the sheltering roof of Sir Thomas Abney, Lady Abney continuing the hospitality after her husband's death. The writings of Watts include some prose works, one on *Logic* and another on *The Improvement of the Mind*. The University of Edinburgh conferred on him in 1728 the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity, a distinction which met with the approval of Dr. Johnson, who remarked that academical honours would have more value if they were always bestowed with equal judgment. Besides the works already mentioned, Dr. Watts wrote, in 1726, a treatise on *Astronomy and Geography*. It has been well said that his is 'a name never to be pronounced without reverence by any lover of pure Christianity, or by any well-wisher of mankind.'

*William Shenstone* (1714-1763), though now almost entirely forgotten, was once a popular poet. His chief work was a beau-



tiful poem entitled *The Schoolmistress*, written in the Spenserian stanza, in which he immortalized the mistress of the dame-school at which he received his early training. Many passages in the poem are worthy of the pen of Goldsmith. 'He is still more remarkable,' says Mr. Shaw, 'as having been one of the first to cultivate that picturesque mode of laying out gardens, and developing by well-concealed art the natural beauties of scenery, which, under the name of the English style, has supplanted the majestic but formal manner of Italy, France, and Holland.' *The Schoolmistress* was published in 1742, but is said to have been written when the poet was at college, his alma-mater being Pembroke College, Oxford. He is the author of *A Pastoral Ballad*, which is the finest specimen of its kind in the English language. It was published in 1743.

## FROM 'THE SCHOOLMISTRESS'

Her cap, far whiter than the driven snow,  
 Emblem right meet of decency does yield :  
 Her apron died in grain, as blue, I trow,  
 As is the harebell that adorns the field ;  
 And in her hand, for sceptre, she does wield  
 Tway birchen sprays ; with anxious fear entwined,  
 With dark distrust, and sad repentance filled ;  
 And steadfast hate, and sharp affliction joined,  
 And fury uncontrolled, and chastisement unkind.

## FROM 'A PASTORAL BALLAD'

Ye shepherds, so cheerful and gay,  
 Whose flocks never carelessly roam ;  
 Should Corydon's happen to stray,  
 Oh ! call the poor wanderers home.  
 Allow me to muse and to sigh,  
 Nor talk of the change that ye find ;  
 None once was so watchful as I ;  
 I have left my dear Phyllis behind.

*Very Rev. William Thomson* (died in 1766) was a close imitator of Spenser, and marred his work by the needless use of archaic words and phrases. He published two volumes of poems, among which those entitled *The Nativity*, *Sickness*, and *The Hymn to May* were once very well esteemed by critics. He graduated M.A. at Queen's College, Oxford, in 1738. He became a Fellow of the same college, took Holy Orders, and died as Dean of Raphoe, in Ireland.



*Dr. Mark Akenside* (1721-1770), a physician of high standing, was, to quote the words of Pope, 'no everyday writer.' He was the son of a butcher at Newcastle-on-Tyne. He took the degree of M.D. at Leyden University in 1744. His chief poem is entitled *The Pleasures of the Imagination*. It is a learned disquisition on the effect of beautiful objects on the mind of man, and is written in graceful and flowing blank verse. The poem was written in early manhood, and was not equalled by any subsequent work of its author. The following is a typical passage :

## TASTE

What, then, is taste, but these internal powers  
Active and strong, and feelingly alive  
To each fine impulse ? a discerning sense  
Of decent and sublime, with quick disgust  
From things deformed or disarranged, or gross  
In species ? This, nor gems nor stores of gold  
Nor purple state, nor culture can bestow ;  
But God alone, when first His active hand  
Imprints the secret bias of the soul.

*John Byrom* (1691-1763) was born at Manchester. He was among the unfortunates whose birth took place on a 29th of February, and who consequently had only one birthday in every four years. He is now best remembered as the author of *Christians, Awake !* the popular Christmas hymn, which was composed in 1745. The familiar melody, 'Mortram,' to which the words are usually sung, was by John Wainwright, an eminent organist. The original manuscript of the hymn is in the archives of Cheetham's Hospital, Manchester, and was written by the poet for his daughter Dolly. It is headed *Christmas Day for Dolly*. He was the inventor of a system of shorthand, for which he received a grant from Parliament. He is also the author of a poem which appeared in the *Spectator* of the 6th of October, 1714, entitled *A Pastoral*, and beginning, *My time, O ye Muses, was happily spent*. Byrom was a B.A. of Trinity College, Cambridge, and studied medicine at Montpellier, in France.

*The Rev. Richard Gifford* (1725-1807) was Vicar of Duffield in Derbyshire, Rector of North Ockendon, in Essex, and Chaplain to the Marquess of Tweeddale. He was the author of a striking poem on *Contemplation*, which was well spoken of by Dr. Johnson, who quotes a stanza of it in his Dictionary as furnishing an illus-



tration of the meaning of the word *vicissitude*. Johnson has slightly altered the verse, which in the original runs as follows :

Verse sweetens toil, however rude the sound,  
She feels no biting pang the while she sings;  
Nor, as she turns the giddy wheel around,  
Revolves the sad vicissitude of things.

*Robert Lloyd* (1733-1764) was born in London, his father being an assistant-master at Westminster School. He was educated at Cambridge, and was appointed an usher at the school before-mentioned, but he did not like teaching, and abandoned it for a literary career. He published a number of poems, chiefly of a fugitive kind, and became editor of the *St. James's Magazine*. His best poem was entitled *The Actor*, and is said to have been the precursor of *The Rosciad* of Churchill. Lloyd, in conjunction with Colman, parodied the odes of Gray. He seems to have been something of a pessimist, and wrote of the miseries of a poet's life and the wretchedness of a school-usher.

*Charles Churchill* (1731-1764) was educated at Westminster School and at Cambridge. He took Holy Orders, but subsequently, after a display of careless habits and neglect of clerical proprieties, retired from the Church. He was the author of a poem entitled *The Rosciad*, which appeared in 1761, and won such golden opinions that critics hailed its author as a second Dryden, but posterity has not endorsed their judgment. The best of his satires is entitled *The Prophecy of Famine*, which is a tirade against the Scotch, written in 1762. He also wrote a poem called *Night*. All his poems were highly thought of in his day, but they have lost their interest, and have been stigmatized by Mr. Collier as 'biting and fluid poetry of an inferior order.' The poet lived a dissipated life, but perhaps one of his finest passages is on *Remorse*.

*Bishop Thomas Percy* (1729-1811) was a native of Shropshire, who became Dean of Carlisle, and afterwards Bishop of Dromore, in Ireland. 'The friend of Johnson, and one of the most accomplished members of that circle in which Johnson was supreme, Percy was strongly impressed with the vast stores of the beautiful though rude poetry which lay buried in obscure collections of ballads and legendary compositions, and he devoted himself to



the task of explaining and popularizing the then neglected beauties of those old rhapsodists with the ardour of an antiquary and with the taste of a true poet.' No words could better express the extent and nature of the debt which English literature owes to the labours of Percy. In 1765 he published a great collection of such works under the title *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. The book contained no less than one hundred and seventy-six pieces, forty-five of which were printed from the folio manuscript. It would be difficult to say how far-reaching was the influence exerted by this revival on contemporary and subsequent verse. But it is well known to have given colour to the early writings of Sir Walter Scott, and also to have wrought an influence upon the verse of Coleridge and Wordsworth. The book itself should be in the possession of every student, were it only for a careful perusal of the *Essay on the Ancient Minstrels* with which it is prefaced. Bishop Percy was also the author of some original poems which are too well known to need more than a mention of their names, as *The Friar of Orders Gray*, and *O Nancy, wilt Thou go with Me?* How great a debt we owe to Percy may be judged from the fact that Mr. Shaw thinks it possible that but for Percy's *Reliques* we might never have had either *The Lady of the Lake* or *Waverley*.

## FROM 'NANCY'

O Nancy, when thou'rt far away,  
 Wilt thou not cast a wish behind?  
 Say, canst thou face the parching ray,  
 Nor shrink before the wintry wind?  
 O can that soft and gentle mien  
 Extremes of hardship learn to bear,  
 Nor, sad, regret each courtly scene,  
 Where thou wert fairest of the fair?

*Mrs. Thrale* (1739-1821), otherwise *Mrs. Piozzi*, as she subsequently became, was the wife of an opulent brewer who showed great hospitality to Dr. Johnson. She wrote a number of works of no very great merit, but her poem entitled *The Three Warnings* is so well written that it has been thought the learned doctor had a hand in its composition.

*Richard Glover* (1712-1785) was a merchant in London and a Member of Parliament for Weymouth. He was the author of a poem entitled *Leonidas*, which was very popular in his day, but is now little thought of. He also wrote a sequel to it, which he



called *Athenais*. The former was published when he was twenty-five years of age (in 1737), but the latter was not published until 1787, two years after the poet's death.

*William Mason* (1728-1797), an intimate friend of the poet Gray, was born in Yorkshire. His friendship with Gray began at Cambridge, where the two were fellow-students. Mason was the author of a number of odes and dramatic pieces, but his best work is a poem entitled *The English Garden*, a composition in blank verse, divided into four books. He published an edition of Gray's poems with a memoir.

*The Rev. Francis Fawkes* (1721-1777) was Vicar of Hayes in Kent. He translated the odes of Anacreon (Johnson said very finely), and wrote some very creditable original verses. 'However classic in his tastes and studies, he seems to have relished a cup of English ale.'

*John Armstrong* (1709-1779) studied medicine in Edinburgh, and graduated M.D. in 1732. He was the author of a poem of a didactic tendency, entitled *The Art of Preserving Health*, which was praised by Warton for its classical correctness and poetical imagery.

*Sir William Blackstone* (1723-1780) was a lawyer who eventually became a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. He was given to poetic exercises, but took leave of the pastime in a graceful poem contributed to Dodsley's *Miscellany*, and entitled *The Lawyer's Farewell to his Muse*.

*Dr. James Grainger* (1721-1766) studied medicine in Edinburgh, and, having served for awhile in the army, settled down in a London practice. Eventually he went to the West Indies, where he married a lady of fortune. His poetical works include *Solitude*, which was published in 1755, and was praised by Johnson. He also wrote *The Sugar-cane*, in 1764, and a translation of Tibullus.

*The Rev. James Merrick* (1720-1769) was educated at Oxford, where he acted as tutor to Lord North. He wrote some hymns and an amusing poem, or fable in verse, entitled *The Chameleon*.



*The Rev. Dr. John Langhorne* (1735-1779) was born in Westmorland. He was a miscellaneous writer, and amongst his works may be mentioned a poem of some merit entitled *Country Justice*. He became a prebendary of Wells Cathedral, and was greatly admired as a preacher.

*John Scott* (1739-1783) was the son of a draper in London who eventually retired to Amwell, in Hertfordshire, where the future poet passed his life. In 1776 he published a poem entitled *Amwell*, which is his best work.

*William Whitehead* (1715-1785) became Poet-Laureate on the death of Colley Cibber, Gray having declined the honour of the appointment. He was the author of seven dramas. He was educated at Winchester School, and obtained a scholarship at Cambridge. Amongst his works are two plays, entitled respectively *The Roman Father* and *Creusa*. 'An easy and playful' poem on *Variety* may be mentioned as containing some graceful passages.

*The Rev. Samuel Bishop* (1731-1795) was Head-master of Merchant Taylors' School. He wrote a number of essays and poems. The best of the latter are in praise of his wife.

*Christopher Smart* (1722-1770) was a Fellow of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. His best poem is entitled *A Song to David*, which is a religious poem of great originality and beauty. He wrote a satire on Sir John Hill which he called the *Hilliad*. He went mad eventually, was confined in a madhouse, and is said to have indented some of his best work on the wall of his cell with a key.

*The Rev. Thomas Warton* (1728-1790) was the author of a very exhaustive and valuable *History of English Poetry*, which, however, only extends as far as the beginning of the Elizabethan era, which he speaks of as 'the most poetical age of our annals.' He adopts the chronological method of arranging his work, 'as giving freer exertion for research, and as enabling him to exhibit, without transposition, the gradual improvement in our poetry, and the progression of our language.' Thomas Warton was appointed Poet-Laureate on the death of Whitehead in 1785. His chief poem is entitled *The Pleasures of Melancholy*, and was written at the age of nineteen. He became a Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, and Professor of Poetry at his University.



*The Rev. Dr. Joseph Warton* (1722-1800) was educated at Winchester School, of which he eventually became head-master, besides obtaining prebends of St. Paul's and Winchester. He wrote some poetical works, including an *Ode to Fancy*, which evinces considerable power. He was a member of Johnson's literary club, and edited an edition of Pope's works in 1797. Thomas and Joseph Warton were sons of Dr. Warton, of Magdalen College, Oxford, who was twice appointed to the Professorship of Poetry at the University, and was himself the author of some meritorious verse.

*Christopher Anstey* (1724-1805) was the author of a poetical work which bore the strange and somewhat misleading title of *The New Bath Guide*. 'It stole into the world,' wrote Horace Walpole, 'and for a fortnight no soul looked into it, concluding its name was its true name. No such thing. It is a set of letters in verse, in all kinds of verse, describing the life at Bath, and incidentally everything else; but so much wit, so much humour, fun, and poetry, so much originality, never met together before.' Five years afterwards Smollett, in *Humphrey Clinker*, may be said to have 'reduced it to prose.' It is full of wit like this:

Oh! had I a voice that was stronger than steel  
With twice fifty tongues to express what I feel,  
And as many good mouths, I never could utter  
All the speeches my lord made to Lady Bunbutter.

*The Rev. Richard Jago* (1715-1781), Vicar of Snitterfield, published a poem called *Edgehill* in 1767, and *Labour and Genius; or, The Millstream and the Cascade, a Fable*, in 1768. He was also the author of other poems.

*The Rev. T. Moss* (died in 1808) published a small collection of miscellaneous poems in 1769. He was Minister of Brierley Hill and of Trentham, in Staffordshire.

*William Gifford* (1756-1826) was born at Ashburton, in Devonshire. He was celebrated as a poet, translator, and critic, and was the first editor of the *Quarterly Review*. He was in a great measure self-educated. He translated *Juvenal* in 1802, and published 'two of the most bitter, powerful, and resistless literary satires which modern days have produced.' These are the *Baviad* (1794) and *Mæviad* (1795). His work as an editor was very extensive and varied.



*Dr. John Wolcot* (1738-1819), who wrote under the name of 'Peter Pindar,' was 'a coarse and lively satirist,' and was born at Dodbrooke, in Devonshire. He directed some of his strongest satires at the tempting weaknesses of King George III. One of his most amusing attacks is levelled at Boswell, and is entitled *Bozzy and Piozzi; or, The British Biographers*. His works, on the whole, afford very entertaining reading, but, taken as poetry, they are not of a high order of merit.

*The Rev. William Crowe* (circa 1746-1829) was educated at New College, Oxford, of which he became a Fellow in 1773. He was appointed Professor of Poetry and Public Orator, and also became Rector of Alton Barnes. He wrote a poem called *Lewesdon Hill*, in blank verse, and other poetical pieces, all of which are well executed.

*Mrs. Charlotte Smith* (1749-1806) was a versatile writer, being celebrated as a novelist besides being a writer of excellent verse.

*Miss Susanna Blamire* (1747-1794), though born in Cumberland, is chiefly distinguished for 'the excellence of her Scottish poetry, which has all the idiomatic ease and grace of a native minstrel.' Her *Poems* were published in 1842.

*The Rev. Christopher Pitt* (1699-1748) was a poet-translator, who published in 1725 *Vida's Art of Poetry, translated into English Verse*. He also translated the whole of the *Æneid*, and imitated some of the epistles and satires of Horace. Johnson spoke well of him, but his work is now but little read.

*James Hammond* (1710-1742) was a nephew of Sir Robert Walpole. He 'bestowed his affections on a Miss Dashwood, whose agreeable qualities and inexorable rejection of his suit inspired the poetry by which his name has been handed down to us. His verses are imitations of Tibullus—smooth, tame, and frigid.'

*Robert Bloomfield* (1766-1823) was a very popular poet in his day. He was the son of a tailor at Honington, but though he began life on his own account as a shoemaker, he was fortunate enough to attract the attention of the Duke of Grafton, who obtained an appointment for him in the Seal Office. His prin-



cipal poetical works are *The Farmer's Boy* (1798), *Rural Tales* (1810), *Wild Flowers*, *The Banks of Wye*, and *Mayday with the Muses*. His versification is excellent, with a uniformity of merit throughout.

*William Blake* (1757-1827) was born in London. He was the son of a hosier, and was apprenticed to an engraver. He was of an artistic and poetical temperament from the first, and made the best use of his leisure moments by drawing pictures and writing verses. At the age of twenty he had written a number of songs and ballads, as well as a dramatic poem. These were printed by Flaxman and a gentleman named Matthews. *Songs of Innocence* appeared in 1789, with illustrations etched on copper by the poet and his wife. He was 'an artist-poet of rare but wild and wayward genius.' One of his poems, on the *Tiger*, was spoken of by Charles Lamb as 'glorious.' The first verse is the best :

Tiger, tiger, burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry ?

*Mrs. Elizabeth Carter* (1717-1806) was 'a learned and pious lady, familiar to the readers of Boswell's *Johnson*.' She published a small volume of poems, which were composed before she was twenty years old. The best of her poems is an *Ode to Wisdom*. Johnson commemorated her talents in two epigrams, one in Greek and the other in Latin. The Latin epigram is as follows :

Elysios Popi dum ludit læta per hostos,  
En avida lauros carpit Eliza manu,  
Nil opus est furto. Lauros tibi, dulcis Eliza,  
Si neget optatas Popus, Apollo dabit.

Mrs. Carter's *Ode to Wisdom* was inserted by Richardson in *Clarissa Harlowe*.

*Thomas Tickell* (1686-1740), a friend of Joseph Addison, was a contributor to the *Spectator*. He was the author of a pathetic ballad entitled *Colin and Lucy*, and another poem called *Kensington Gardens*, as well as a number of papers in the *Spectator* and *Guardian*. He wrote an elegy on the death of Addison which has been much admired. Tickell went to Ireland in 1724 as Secretary to the Lords Justices. He died at Bath in 1740. He was



educated at Queen's College, Oxford. There are magnificent lines in the elegy on Addison, such as :

Can I forget the dismal night that gave  
My soul's best part for ever to the grave ?

\* \* \* \* \*

While speechless o'er thy closing grave we bend,  
Accept these tears, thou dear departed friend.

\* \* \* \* \*

Oft let me range the gloomy aisles alone,  
Sad luxury ! to vulgar minds unknown,  
Along the walls where speaking marbles show  
What worthies form the hallowed mould below ;  
Proud names, who once the reins of empire held ;  
In arms who triumphed, or in arts excelled.

Tickell is buried at Glasnevin Cemetery, in Dublin. It is recorded on his tomb that ' his highest honour was that of having been the friend of Addison.'

*Ambrose Philips* (1671-1749) was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge. He was a friend of Addison and Steele, but was called ' Namby Pamby ' by Pope and his followers. He contributed some *Pastorals* to *Tonson's Miscellany* in 1709, and some poems of the same description by Pope were in the same number. The work of Tickell is not by any means perfect, but he wrote an *Epistle to the Earl of Dorset* which Goldsmith speaks of as ' incomparably fine.' Its style is not unlike Goldsmith's own. Lines like these are satisfying :

In pearls and rubies rich the hawthorns shew,  
While through the ice the crimson berries glow,  
The thick-sprung reeds, which watery marshes yield,  
Seemed polished lances in a hostile field.

*Richard Savage* (1697-1743) was the unfortunate friend of Johnson whose miserable history is familiar to all readers of the learned doctor's biographies. He was the illegitimate son of Richard Savage, Earl Rivers, and the Countess of Macclesfield. He led a dissipated life, and sank lower and lower until, in 1743, he was found dead in bed in Bristol Gaol, where he was detained as a debtor. His chief poetical works are *The Wanderer*, written at Lord Tyrconnel's house in 1729, and a poem entitled *The Bastard*.

*Sir William Jones* (1746-1794) was educated at Harrow and at University College, Oxford. He was a miscellaneous writer, amongst his works being two small volumes of poems. But his work consists chiefly of translations from Eastern writers. He



became a Judge of the Supreme Court at Calcutta, and was celebrated as an Oriental scholar. He translated a dramatic poem from the Sanskrit.

*Nathaniel Cotton* (1707-1788) was a physician at St. Albans who numbered Cowper amongst his patients. He was the author of *Miscellaneous Poems*. He also wrote *Visions in Verse* for children.

*William Hayley* (1745-1820) was educated at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He was a friend of Cowper, whose biography he wrote. He was the author of *The Triumphs of Temper*, a poem in six cantos, which appeared in 1781, an *Essay on Epic Poetry* (1782), and a number of other works in prose and verse. His poetry is of a high order of merit. In the *Essay on Epic Poetry* are some lines written as a *Tribute to his Mother, on her Death*, which 'had the merit of delighting Gibbon, and with which Southey has remarked Cowper would sympathize deeply.' It contains many fine lines, such as these :

Nor will the public with harsh rigour blame  
This my just homage to thy honoured name ;  
To please the public, if to please be mine,  
Thy virtues trained me—let the praise be thine.

*Dr. Erasmus Darwin* (1731-1802) was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, and took the degree of M.B. at Edinburgh in 1755. He published a beautiful poem in 1781, entitled *The Botanic Garden*, and a continuation of it in 1789, entitled *Loves of the Plants*. He has been called 'The Poet-Laureate of Botany.' His popularity as a poet has not been well sustained.

*David Garrick* (1716-1779) is best remembered as the greatest of all English actors, eminent in tragedy and comedy alike, but he was also the author of some dramatic pieces. His chief plays are *The Lying Valet* and *Miss in her Teens*. He also 'wrote some epigrams, and even ventured on an ode or two.'

*Miss Anna Seward* (1747-1809) was the daughter of a Canon of Lichfield, who was himself a poet and one of the editors of Beaumont and Fletcher. She wrote some elegies, including one on the *Death of Captain Cook*, and *A Monody on the Death of Major André*.

*Mrs. Anne Hunter* (1742-1821) published a collection of poems in 1806. Haydn set some of her songs to music.



George Colman, the Younger (1762-1836), best known as a dramatist, wrote some poems which attained to a certain degree of popularity—e.g., *The Newcastle Apothecary* and *Lodgings for Single Gentlemen*.

Thomas Yalden (1671-1736) was born in Exeter, and became a scholar of Magdalen College, Oxford, and subsequently a Fellow. Johnson says his poems 'deserve perusal,' the best being a *Hymn to Darkness*.

Dr. Gilbert West (1700 ? -1756) was the author of several poems, including one *On the Abuse of Travelling*, a canto in imitation of Spenser, which is praised by Gray. He also translated the odes of Pindar. The University of Oxford conferred on him the honorary degree of LL.D.

George Lillo (1693-1739) was a dramatic poet of considerable power. He wrote *George Barnwell*, *Fatal Curiosity*, *Arden of Feversham*, and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*. In style and manner 'he is real, but with the reality, not of Walter Scott, but of Defoe.'

Robert Dodsley (1709-1764) was a publisher and a patron of literature. In 1758 he issued a *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*. He also wrote some original poems and dramatic pieces. His shop was in Pall Mall, and Pope lent him £100, to enable him to commence business. He wrote seven dramatic pieces, including *The Toyshop*, *Rex et Pontifex*, and *Cleone*.

David Mallet (circa 1700-1765) was 'a successful but unprincipled literary adventurer,' and is now chiefly remembered for his *Ballads*. Of these the best is entitled *William and Margaret*.

Lord Lyttelton (1709-1773) is honoured with a place amongst the poets by Dr. Johnson, but his poems are not very striking. He was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and raised to the Peerage.

James Cawthorne (1720-1761) was born at or near Sheffield, and was educated partly at Rotherham and partly at Kirkby Lonsdale. His first employment was that of an usher in a school kept by a Mr. Clare in London. In 1743 he was appointed Master of Tunbridge School. In 1746 he published a poem entitled *Abelard to Eloisa*.



Soame Jenyns (1705-1787) was the only son of Sir Roger Jenyns, and was born at Bottesham, in Cambridge. He was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, but left without taking a degree. He showed a talent for poetical composition early in life, publishing *The Art of Dancing* in 1729, an *Epistle to Lord Lovelace* in 1735, and a volume of poems in 1752. He is mentioned by Dr. Johnson.

Paul Whitehead (1710-1774) is mentioned by Dr. Johnson in his *Lives of the Poets*. 'His first performance was the *State Dunces*, inscribed to Mr. Pope, in 1733; and in 1738 he published *Manners*, a satire. Other works of his include *The Gymnasiad*, published in 1744, and *Honour*, a satire, which appeared in 1747.

### SCOTTISH POETS

Robert Fergusson (1751-1774) was born in Edinburgh, and educated at St. Andrews University. He has been called the 'poetical progenitor' of Robert Burns, 'the poet of Scottish city life,' and 'the Laureate of Edinburgh.' All these titles he richly deserved. But, unfortunately, he lived a life of gaiety and dissipation, which brought him to an early grave. Fergusson began his poetical career by contributing pieces to Ruddiman's *Weekly Magazine*, and in 1773 he published his poems in one volume. Amongst the best of his works may be mentioned *The King's Birthday*, *Braid Claith*, and an *Address to the Iron Kirk Bell*. He is accounted the best of the Scottish vernacular poets of his time. The following lines, from a quaint description of a Sunday in Edinburgh, will give a fair idea of this poet's style:

On Sunday, here, an altered scene  
O' men and manners meets our een.  
Ane wad maist trow, some people chose  
To change their faces wi' their clo'es,  
And fain wad gar ilk neibour think  
They thirst for guidness as for drink;  
But there's an unco dearth o' grace,  
That has nae mansion but the face,  
And never can obtain a part  
In benmost corner o' the heart.

John Wilson (1720-1789) was a parochial schoolmaster at Greenock, and the author of a poem on *The Clyde*, containing nearly 2,000 lines. He is not to be confounded with Professor John Wilson, known as 'Christopher North.'



*William Hamilton* (1704-1754) was a gentleman of ancient lineage, and was born in Ayrshire. In 1745 he joined the standard of Prince Charles, and became the 'Volunteer Laureate' of the Jacobites. He was best at the composition of lyric poetry. His ballad entitled *The Braes of Yarrow* is considered to be his finest poem, and is also said to have influenced Wordsworth in the composition of his charming poems on *Yarrow*. A complete edition of Hamilton's poems was published in 1850, edited by James Patterson.

*The Rev. John Skinner* (1721-1807), episcopal minister of Longside, Aberdeenshire, for sixty-five years, is said to have influenced the strains of Robert Burns. 'After the troubled period of the rebellion of 1745, when the episcopal clergy of Scotland laboured under the charge of disaffection, Skinner was imprisoned six months for preaching to more than four persons!' He was the author of *Tullochgorum* and other poems, chiefly songs.

*Robert Crawford* (circa 1695-1733) assisted Allan Ramsay in his *Tea-table Miscellany*. He was the author of some poems, of which *The Bush aboon Traquair* and *Tweedside*, two excellent lyrics, deserve special mention.

*Lady Grisell Baillie* (1665-1746) was a daughter of Sir Patrick Home, who was raised to the peerage as Earl of Marchmont. She was born at Redbraes Castle, and married George Baillie, of Jarviswood. She was the author of a popular Scottish song entitled *Were na my Heart licht*.

*Sir Gilbert Elliot* (1722-1777) was the third Baronet of Minto. Educated for the Scottish Bar, he rose to be Keeper of the Signet, and served for twenty years in Parliament. Mr. Tytler, of Woodhouselee, says that Sir Gilbert was taught the German flute in France, and introduced it into Scotland about the year 1725. He was the author of a pastoral song which has been called 'beautiful' by Sir Walter Scott. It is called *Amynta*, and begins thus :

My sheep I neglected, I broke my sheep-hook,  
And all the gay haunts of my youth I forsook ;  
No more for Amynta fresh garlands I wove ;  
For ambition, I said, would soon cure me of love.  
Oh, what had my youth with ambition to do ?  
Why left I Amynta ? Why broke I my vow ?  
Oh, give me my sheep, and my sheep-hook restore,  
And I'll wander from love and Amynta no more.



*Alexander Ross* (1698-1784), a schoolmaster in Lochlee in Angus, was nearly seventy years old when he published a volume of verse entitled *Helenore ; or, The Fortunate Shepherdess, a Pastoral Tale in the Scottish Dialect, to which are added a few Songs by the Author*. At least two of the songs are still popular in Scotland, those being entitled respectively *Woo'd, and Married, and a'*, and *The Rock and the Wee Pickle Tow*.

*John Lowe* (1750-1798) was the son of a gardener at Kenmore, in Galloway. He was the author of a pretty poem called *Mary's Dream*.

*Lady Anne Barnard* (1750-1825) was the daughter of James Lindsay, fifth Earl of Balcarres. She married Andrew Barnard, son of the Bishop of Limerick. She was the author of the popular ballad *Auld Robin Gray*, which she composed to an ancient air. She is said to have kept the authorship a secret for a long time, until, in 1823, she acknowledged it in a letter to Sir Walter Scott.

*Miss Jane Elliot* (1727-1805) was a daughter of Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto. She was the author of a beautiful ballad called *The Flowers of the Forest*. Sir Walter Scott remarked upon the happy manner in which the ancient minstrels are imitated by Miss Elliot.

*James Macpherson* (1738-1796) was 'a sort of literary adventurer of rather equivocal reputation.' He was a country schoolmaster, and the author of a *History of Great Britain from the Restoration to the Accession of the House of Hanover*. He published at the age of twenty a heroic poem, in six cantos, entitled *The Highlander*, 'a miserable production.' But his dubious fame rests upon the fact that he professed to have accumulated a large number of fragments of ancient poetry in the Gaelic dialect, which he attributed to Ossian, 'the Celtic Homer.' These fragments he professed to have translated, and for awhile he succeeded in deceiving the public, who subscribed a large sum to enable him to continue his researches. In 1762 he published *Fingal, an Ancient Epic Poem, in Six Books*; and in 1763 *Temora*, another epic, in eight books. These were also attributed to Ossian. But the whole collection is now acknowledged to be an audacious forgery.



*Richard Gall* (1776-1800) was a printer in Edinburgh. He was the author of some popular songs, one of which, entitled *Farewell to Ayrshire*, has sometimes been wrongly attributed to Robert Burns, on account of the fact that a copy of it in the greater poet's handwriting was found amongst his papers. The most popular of Gall's songs is called *My only Jo and Dearie O*.

*Alexander Wilson* (1766-1813) is chiefly remembered as a great writer on natural history, but he wrote some excellent verse. He was born at Paisley, and followed in turn the callings of weaver and pedlar. His best poem is *Watty and Meg*, which he published anonymously. It was at first attributed to Burns. Mrs. Burns is responsible for the following story in connection with it: 'As Burns was one day sitting at his desk by the side of the window, a well-known hawker, Andrew Bishop, went past crying, "*Watty and Meg*, a new ballad, by Robert Burns." The poet looked out, and said: "That's a lee, Andrew, but I would make you plack a bawbee if it were mine."'

*Hector Macneill* (1746-1818) was the author of a legendary poem entitled *The Harp*, published in 1789, and a moral tale called *Scotland's Skaith; or, the History of Will and Jean*, issued in 1795. Both the poems are well executed. He also wrote some lyrics and an excellent descriptive poem entitled *The Links of Forth; or, A Parting Peep at the Carse of Stirling*.

*John Mayne* (1761-1836) was born in Dumfries. He was a printer, and at the age of sixteen began the issue of a notable poem called *The Siller Gun*. It describes 'an ancient custom in Dumfries called "Shooting the Siller Gun," the gun being a small silver tube presented by James VI. to the incorporated trades as a prize to the best marksman.' Sir Walter Scott thought the poem came near to those of Burns. Mayne also wrote some other poems.

*Sir Alexander Boswell* (1775-1822) was the eldest son of the biographer of Dr. Johnson. He was the author of a poem called *Edinburgh; or, The Ancient Royalty*, as well as of some popular songs. He was killed in a duel with Mr. Stuart of Dunearn, whom he had satirized.



*Robert Tannahill* (1774-1810) was born in Paisley, and in early life followed the trade of a weaver. He wrote lyrical poems of a high order of merit. Amongst his best are *The Braes o' Balquhither*, *Gloomy Winter's now Awa'*, and *The Flower o' Dunblane*. He went mad and committed suicide.

*Michael Bruce* (1746-1767), the son of a weaver, was born at Kinneswood, in the county of Kinross. In earlier years he was a cowherd, but on the death of his father he went to Edinburgh University, where he became distinguished for his application to study and a proficiency in verse-making. Leaving college after three sessions, apparently without a degree, he obtained an appointment as schoolmaster at Gairney Bridge, at a stipend of £11 per annum. Afterwards he removed to Forest Hill, but the schoolroom was so low-roofed and damp that he contracted consumption. He returned to his father's cottage, and died at the early age of twenty-three. *Lochleven*, a poem, was written at Forest Hill, but his best work was an *Elegy*, written just before he died. The *Elegy* begins thus :

'Tis past : the iron North has spent his rage ;  
Stern Winter now resigns the lengthening day ;  
The stormy howlings of the winds assuage,  
And warm o'er ether western breezes play.

*John Logan* (1748-1788) was born at Fala, in Midlothian. He became a minister of South Leith. He published a volume of poems in 1781. His best poem is an ode *To the Cuckoo*, and amongst the others may be mentioned *A Visit to the Country in Autumn*, *The Lovers*, and a ballad on *The Braes of Yarrow*.

*Dr. Thomas Blacklock* (1721-1791) was blind. He became minister of Kirkcudbright. He wrote a number of descriptive poems which possess no very great merit, but being descriptive, they excite admiration as the work of one to whom light was denied.

*Dr. James Beattie* (1735-1803), the son of a farmer at Laurencekirk, in the county of Kincardine, is chiefly remembered as the author of a fine didactic poem called *The Minstrel*, written in the Spenserian stanza. It is 'designed to trace the progress of a poetical genius, born in a rude age, from the first dawning of fancy and reason till that period at which he may be supposed



capable of appearing in the world as a minstrel.' It is a fine poem, greatly superior to the other poetical works of its author. Beattie was fortunate enough to receive a pension from the Crown amounting to £200 a year, and the University of Oxford conferred on him the honorary degree of LL.D.

*William Julius Mickle* (1734-1788), the son of a Scottish minister, was born in Dumfriesshire. He was a brewer, but failed in business, and went to London. Meeting with but little success, he went to Oxford, and became a 'corrector' for the Clarendon Press. *Cumnor Hall*, which is said to have suggested the plot of *Kenilworth* to Sir Walter Scott, is his most popular poem, but he was the author of several others.

*John Home* (1722-1808) was a minister of the Scotch Church. He was the author of a tragedy called *Douglas*, which is chiefly remembered now for the lines commencing :

My name is Norval. On the Grampian Hills  
My father feeds his flocks.

Sir Walter Scott says of Home that his works 'are, after all, poorer than I thought them. Good blank verse and stately sentiment, but something lukewarmish, excepting *Douglas*, which is certainly a masterpiece.'

*Mrs. Anne Grant* (1755-1838) published a volume of poems in 1803. They are chiefly descriptive of scenes and customs characteristic of the Highlands of Scotland.

*Dr. William Wilkie* (1721-1772), a native of Echlin, was Professor of Natural Philosophy in St. Andrews University. He was the author of the *Epigoniad*, a poem in nine books, founded on part of the *Iliad* of Homer. He was very eccentric, and is said to have worn an enormous quantity of clothes at once, besides sleeping with two dozen blankets over him in bed.

*William Falconer* (1732-1769), the son of a barber in Edinburgh, went to sea in his earlier years. Having escaped shipwreck off Cape Colonna, in a manner described in one of his poems, he returned to his native city. His first poem appeared in 1751. It was a monody on the death of Frederick, Prince of Wales. *The Shipwreck* appeared in 1762. It ran through three editions during the lifetime of the author. It is a remarkably able and entertaining poem, displaying great talent in description.



Mr. Chambers says : ' The truth of the whole poem is indeed one of its greatest attractions. We feel that it is a passage of real life ; and even where the poet seems to violate the canons of taste and criticism, allowance is liberally made for the peculiar situation of the author, while he rivets our attention to the scenes of trial and distress which he so fortunately survived to describe.'

*The Rev. James Grahame* (1765-1811) was born in Glasgow. In 1801 he published a dramatic poem entitled *Mary, Queen of Scotland*. Later he published *The Sabbath, Sabbath Walks*, and other poems. His name is chiefly associated with *The Sabbath*, which is his best poem. His writing is moulded on the style of Cowper, full of Scottish associations, earnest and beautiful in spirit, but ' somewhat deficient in compactness of picture and harmony of numbers.' He was a barrister before he took Holy Orders.

Oh, Scotland, much I love thy tranquil dales ;  
But most on Sabbath eve, when low the sun  
Slants thro' the upland copse ; 'tis my delight,  
Wandering and stopping oft, to hear the song  
Of kindred praise arise from humble roofs.

*John Leyden* (1775-1811) was born at Denholm, in Roxburghshire. He was of humble origin, but fought his own way persistently to distinction, becoming eventually a great classical and Oriental scholar, with a large knowledge of modern languages. He was a contributor to Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. His chief poem is entitled *Scenes of Infancy*, a pretty piece descriptive of his native place, the Vale of Teviot. His poem *The Mermaid* is a masterpiece, and gained the praise of Sir Walter Scott, who thought it contained beauties, and evinced a power of numbers which have seldom been excelled in English poetry.

#### FROM 'THE MERMAID'

On Jura's heath how sweetly swell  
The murmurs of the mountain bee !  
How softly mourns the writhed shell  
Of Jura's shore, its parent sea !  
\* \* \* \* \*  
And ever as the year returns  
The charm-bound sailors know the day ;  
For sadly still the Mermaid mourns  
The lovely chief of Colonsay.

*Alexander Thomson* (1763-1803) was presumably a Scotchman. He, at all events, passed his life in Scotland, and died in Edin-



burgh in 1803. He wrote a poetical *Essay on Novels*, *The Paradise of Taste*, a poem, besides *Sonnets*, *Odes*, and *Elegies*, and other works.

### IRISH POETS

*Henry Brooke* (1706-1783) was the son of an Irish clergyman. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. Afterwards he went to London, and was patronized by Frederick, Prince of Wales. He was the author of a poem on *Universal Beauty*, which anticipated the manner of Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic Garden*. He also wrote a tragedy entitled *Gustavus Vasa*, which was supposed to be directed against Sir Robert Walpole. Its representation was forbidden by the Lord Chamberlain. He was a versatile writer, his works comprising a novel, plays, poems, essays, etc. He was a friend of Swift, Pope, and other great writers of the age. His works were published by his daughter, in four volumes, in 1792.

*John Cunningham* (1729-1773) was the son of a wine-cooper in Dublin. He adopted the stage as a profession, and was for several years in Edinburgh performing with Digges' Company. Later in life he became dissipated, and removed to Newcastle-on-Tyne, where he was indebted for hospitality to 'a generous printer.' He was the author of some smooth-flowing and melodious verses, of which we may mention especially a song on *Kate of Aberdeen*, and *Content, a Pastoral*. In 1763 he published a volume of poems, chiefly pastoral, which elicited high praise from Dr. Johnson and other competent judges. His *Day, a Pastoral* is one of the prettiest poems in the English language.

#### FROM 'KATE OF ABERDEEN'

The silver moon's enamoured beam  
Steals softly through the night,  
To wanton with the winding stream,  
And kiss reflected light.  
To beds of state go, balmy sleep—  
'Tis where you've seldom been—  
May's vigil while the shepherds keep  
With Kate of Aberdeen.

\* \* \* \*

Methinks I hear the maids declare  
The promised May, when seen,  
Not half so fragrant, half so fair,  
As Kate of Aberdeen.



*Hugh Kelly* (1739-1777) was an Irish dramatic poet and a scurrilous newspaper writer who 'surprised the public by producing, in 1768, a comedy, *False Delicacy*, which had remarkable success both 'on the fortunes and character of the author.' Davies says that 'from a low, petulant, absurd, and ill-bred censurer, Kelly was transformed to the humane, affable, good-natured, well-bred man.' The profits of the first performance of the play amounted to £150.

*William Drennan* (1754-1820) is remembered as a poet, essayist, and physician. He was born in Belfast. He wrote the prospectus for the 'United Irishmen,' of which society he was the founder, as well as many of their addresses and manifestoes. He was tried for sedition in 1794, but was acquitted. He was a man of great influence in his time, and the author of many songs, poems, essays, and articles.

*Edward Lysaght* (1763-1810) was born at Brickhill, co. Clare. He was a barrister, and during the Volunteer and Anti-Union movements few men were more active and none better known. He was a writer of songs and other poems. One of his best songs is *Our Dear Native Island*.

*Mrs. Mary Tighe* (1773-1810) was a daughter of the Rev. W. Blackford, and wife of Henry Tighe, M.P. for Wicklow. Her poem of *Psyche* is 'founded on the classic fable related by Apuleius, of the loves of Cupid and Psyche, or the allegory of Love and the Soul,' and is 'characterized by a graceful voluptuousness and brilliancy of colouring rarely excelled.' It was privately printed in 1805, and was reprinted with other poems by Mrs. Tighe in 1811.

#### FROM 'PSYCHE'

The amethyst was there, of violet hue,  
 And there the topaz shed its golden ray,  
 The chrysoberyl, and the sapphire blue,  
 As the clear azure of a sunny day,  
 Or the mild eyes where amorous glances play;  
 The snow-white jasper, and the opal's flame,  
 The blushing ruby, and the agate gray,  
 And there the gem that bears his luckless name  
 Whose death, by Phœbus, mourned, insured him deathless fame.



*Thomas Dermody* (1775-1802) was born at Ennis. More precocious than Pope, he wrote at ten years of age a great deal of poetry which was afterwards read with applause. Even at that early age he is said to have been a confirmed drunkard, and this scourge, which was hereditary, pursued him through life. Despite his own great genius, and his many friends' persistent efforts, it plunged him again and again into ruin, and at length destroyed him at the early age of twenty-seven. Dermody has been called 'The Chatterton of Ireland.' The following lines are from a poem on *Songs* :

O tender Songs!  
Heart-heavings of the breast, that longs  
Its best-beloved to meet;  
You tell of Love's delightful hours,  
Of meetings amid jasmine bowers,  
And vows, like perfume of young flowers,  
As fleeting—but more sweet.

\* \* \* \*

O mournful Songs  
When sorrow's host, in gloomy throngs,  
Assail the widowed heart;  
You sing in softly-soothing strain,  
The praise of those whom death has ta'en,  
And tell that we shall meet again,  
And meet no more to part.

O lovely Songs—  
Breathings of Heaven! to you belongs  
The empire of the heart,  
Enthroned in memory, still reign  
O'er minds of prince and peer and swain,  
With gentle power that knows not wane  
Till thought and life depart.

*The Rev. Dr. Philip Francis* (1719-1773) was the son of the Very Rev. John Francis, D.D., Dean of Lismore, and father of Sir Philip Francis, who is supposed to have been the writer of the letters of *Junius*. Dr. Francis was the author of a well-known translation of Horace, which appeared in 1743, and was pronounced by Dr. Johnson to be the best in the English language. He died at Bath on the 5th of March, 1773.

*Richard West* (1716-1742) was the son of the Right Hon. R. West, Lord Chancellor of Ireland. He was a friend of Gray and Walpole. He was the author of an able poem called *Ad Amicos*, written in his twentieth year, and other verses.



## WELSH POETS

*The Rev. John Dyer* (circa 1698-1758) was a native of Aberglasslyn, in the county of Carmarthen. He was educated at Westminster School. He was the son of a solicitor, and was originally intended to follow the same calling. The future poet, however, was artistically inclined, and took to travel instead, studying the art of painting with much care both in England and Italy. He was not very successful as an artist, and on his return to England took Holy Orders. During his absence he had published his greatest poem, *Grongar Hill*, which appeared in 1726. This poem is written in short rhymed lines of seven and eight syllables, and is very sweet and tuneful, with a certain richness of poetic fancy which is pleasing to the reader. In 1757 he published his longest poem, *The Fleece*, which is not so striking a work as the former. The poet died a few months after its publication, having held successively the livings of Calthorp, Coningsby, Belchford, and Kirkby. Dyer was praised by Wordsworth and Gray. The latter, in a letter to Walpole, says: 'Dyer has more of poetry in his imagination than almost any of our number; but rough and injudicious.' Of these two sentiments, the former may be taken as applicable to *Grongar Hill*, and the latter as illustrated by *The Fleece*. Dyer published another poem in 1740, but anonymously. It is written in blank verse, and is entitled *The Ruins of Rome*. A few lines will give a good idea of the style of *Grongar Hill*:

Below me trees unnumbered rise,  
Beautiful in various dyes:  
The gloomy pine, the poplar blue,  
The yellow beech, the sable yew,  
The slender fir, that taper grows,  
The sturdy oak with broad-spread boughs.  
And beyond the purple grove,  
Haunt of Phyllis, queen of love.

*Robert Davies* (1769-1835), better known as Bard Nantglyn, obtained eleven medals on different occasions for his prize poems, and many prizes in money. One of his best was on the *Death of George III.*

*Evan Evans* (1730-1789) was an eminent poet and antiquary. He was educated at Merton College, Oxford. In 1764 he pub-



lished a volume of *Ancient Welsh Poems*. He also published an original poem in English, entitled *The Love of our Country*, and several in Welsh.

*John Bradford* (died in 1780), an ingenious poet, was admitted a disciple of the bardic chair of Glamorgan in 1730, being then a boy. He presided in the same chair in 1760. He was the author of several moral pieces of great merit, some of which are printed in the *Eurgrawn*, a Welsh magazine.

*Hugh Hughes* (1722-1776) was an Anglesey poet. It does not appear that he obtained any great advantages in his early education, but having natural abilities of a high order, he became a good scholar, and wrote several poems in Welsh and English.

*Richard Llwyd* (1752-1835) was generally known as the Bard of Snowdon. In 1800 he published *Beaumaris Bay*, a poem of great merit. He also wrote a number of odes, sonnets, etc.

*Goronwy Owen* (1722-1770) was one of the greatest of the Welsh poets. His compositions are deservedly admired for their poetical beauties. They were first published in 1763.



# GREATER POETS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

## ENGLISH POETS

### HENRY KIRKE WHITE

1785-1806

PRECOCIOUS, brilliant, ardent, amiable, lamented. Such are some of the adjectives which every biographer of this young poet must use if he would do full justice to his theme. To have attained celebrity as a British poet at the age of twenty-one years, and then to leave the world in mourning for his untimely end, must stamp a man at once as endowed with uncommon genius. And this is true of Henry Kirke White, who was born on the 21st of March, 1785. His father was a butcher, and his mother, whose maiden name was Neville, was a member of a respectable Staffordshire family. At the age of three Henry, their second son, was sent to a preparatory school kept by a Mrs. Garrington, who taught him to read and write, and was the first person to take notice of his love for the acquisition of knowledge. He was removed to a larger school at Nottingham when he was six years old. It is recorded of him that while at this academy he showed extraordinary precocity, and one day composed, with singular ease, a separate theme for every boy in the class, numbering fourteen in all. In his fourteenth year he was taken from this school, and placed under the care of Mr. Shipley. Very soon he began to give proof of his poetical gifts. He wrote lines *On being Confined to School one Summer Morning*, and an *Address to Contemplation*, which gave prophetic proof of his genius.

He was at first designed for the trade of a butcher, and was employed out of school hours as a messenger boy by his father. Not caring for this, he was sent into a hosier's shop to learn that



business, but he objected to 'folding up stockings' as much as he had previously scorned the carrying of a basket. He was therefore apprenticed to a solicitor in 1799. He now worked hard at his profession, and in his leisure moments applied himself to the study of Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese.

In addition to these he studied astronomy, electricity, chemistry, drawing, and music. At the age of fifteen he had gained a silver medal from the *Monthly Preceptor* for a translation from Horace, and he continued to write verses with great diligence. On becoming a member of a literary society in Nottingham, he astonished the other members by lecturing ably for two hours on Genius. For this feat they elected him Professor of Literature. Encouraged by these successes, he prepared a volume of poems for the press, and they were issued in 1803. A critic in the *Monthly Review* attacked him with such malignant severity that the censure haunted him incessantly, and he 'was persuaded that it was an instrument in the hands of Satan to drive him to destruction.' But the volume fell into the hands of Robert Southey, who recognised its merits, and gave his friendship and encouragement to the young author, and 'this very review, which was destined to crush the hopes of Henry, has been, in its consequences, the main occasion of bringing his *Remains* to light, and obtaining for him that fame which assuredly will be his portion.'

Through this timely sympathy of Southey and others who were drawn towards the young poet he was enabled to enter St. John's College, Cambridge, as a sizar, with a view to obtaining Holy Orders. Here he studied with great diligence, but for a time his opinions inclined to Deism. A fellow-student, however, lent him Scott's *Force of Truth*, with the result that he became a convert to the orthodox teachings of the Christian faith. For awhile he laid aside poetry, and read for a scholarship, coming out first in the examination. He also obtained exhibitions to the value of £66 per annum. But all this was at the sacrifice of his health, and he died on October 19, 1806, honoured and lamented by all who knew him. Shortly before his death he wrote these memorable words, which read like a fitting epitaph: 'Were I to paint Fame crowning an undergraduate after the senate-house examination, I would represent him as concealing a death's-head under the mask of beauty.'



## THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

When marshalled on the nightly plain,  
 The glittering host bestud the sky ;  
 One star alone, of all the train,  
 Can fix the sinner's wandering eye.  
 Hark ! hark ! to God the chorus breaks,  
 From every host, from every gem ;  
 But one alone the Saviour speaks—  
 It is the Star of Bethlehem.

Once on the raging seas I rode,  
 The storm was loud—the night was dark ;  
 The ocean yawned, and rudely blowed  
 The wind that tossed my foundering bark.  
 Deep horror then my vitals froze,  
 Death-struck, I ceased the tide to stem ;  
 When suddenly a star arose—  
 It was the star of Bethlehem.

It was my guide, my light, my all,  
 It bade my dark forebodings cease ;  
 And through the storm and danger's thrall,  
 It led me to the port of peace.  
 Now safely moored—my perils o'er,  
 I'll sing, first in night's diadem,  
 For ever and for evermore,  
 The Star—the Star of Bethlehem.

## INSTABILITY OF HUMAN GLORY

Oh how weak  
 Is mortal man ! how trifling—how confined  
 His scope of vision ! Puff'd with confidence,  
 His phrase grows big with immortality,  
 And he, poor insect of a summer's day !  
 Dreams of eternal honours to his name ;  
 Of endless glory and perennial bays.  
 He idly reasons of eternity,  
 As of the train of ages,—when, alas !  
 Ten thousand thousand of his centuries  
 Are, in comparison, a little point  
 Too trivial for account. Oh, it is strange,  
 'Tis passing strange, to mark his fallacies !  
 Behold him proudly view some pompous pile,  
 Whose high dome swells to emulate the skies,  
 And smile, and say, My name shall live with this  
 Till Time shall be no more ; while at his feet,  
 Yea, at his very feet, the crumbling dust  
 Of the fallen fabric of the other day  
 Preaches the solemn lesson.—He *should* know  
 That Time must conquer ; that the loudest blast  
 That ever fill'd Renown's obstreperous trumpet  
 Fades in the lapse of ages, and expires.  
 Who lies inhumed in the terrific gloom  
 Of the gigantic pyramid ? or who  
 Rear'd its huge walls ? Oblivion laughs and says,  
 The prey is mine.—They sleep, and never more  
 Their names shall strike upon the ear of man,  
 Till memory burst its fetters.



## TO AN EARLY PRIMROSE

Mild offspring of a dark and sullen sire !  
 Whose modest form, so delicately fine,  
     Was nursed in whirling storms,  
 And cradled in the winds.

Thee, when young Spring first questioned Winter's sway,  
 And dared the sturdy blusterer to the fight,  
     Thee on its bank he threw,  
 To mark his victory.

In this low vale, the promise of the year,  
 Serene, thou openest to the nipping gale,  
     Unnoticed and alone,  
 Thy tender elegance.

So Virtue blooms, brought forth amid the storms  
 Of chill adversity ; in some lone walk  
     Of life she rears her head,  
 Obscure and unobserved ;

While every bleaching breeze that on her blows,  
 Chastens her spotless purity of breast,  
     And hardens her to bear  
 Serene the ills of life.

## SONNET

## TO MY MOTHER

And canst thou, mother, for a moment think,  
     That we, thy children, when old age shall shed  
     Its blanching honours on thy weary head,  
 Could from our best of duties ever shrink ?  
 Sooner the sun from his bright sphere shall sink,  
     Than we ungrateful leave thee in that day,  
     To pine in solitude thy life away,  
 Or shun thee tottering on the grave's cold brink.  
 Banish the thought !—where'er our steps may roam,  
     O'er smiling plains, or wastes without a tree,  
 Still will fond memory point our hearts to thee,  
 And paint the pleasures of thy peaceful home ;  
     While duty bids us all thy griefs assuage,  
 And smoothe the pillow of thy sinking age.

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

1770-1850

THE Lake School of Poetry was founded by William Wordsworth, a native of Cockermouth, in the county of Cumberland, in which place he was born on the 7th of April, 1770. At the age of eight years he was sent to school at Hawkshead, situated in the most beautiful part of Lancashire. At this school the scholars,



instead of being boarded in the same house as the head-master, were housed amongst the residents in the village. There can be but little doubt that the picturesque surroundings in which his earlier years were spent did much to foster the spirit of poesy which was a part of himself. His parents died while he was yet a boy, and the future poet was left to the care of his uncles, Richard Wordsworth and Christopher Crackanthorpe, who sent him in 1787 to St. John's College, Cambridge. There he remained for four years, after which he took his degree. During his undergraduate course he studied a great deal, wrote verses, learnt some Italian, and, in vacation time, went upon sundry tours, making an expedition to France, during the Revolution, in the autumn of 1790. At this period the internal strife was at its height, and the soul of the poet was fired with a desire to champion the cause of liberty. Accordingly, having completed his University course, he went again to France in the following year, and remained there for fifteen months, narrowly escaping the guillotine by a timely return to England in 1792. Politics were not in Wordsworth's line. The beauties of nature were more within the grasp of his genius to read and moralize upon than were the intricacies of national affairs.

The Lake School derived its name from the fact that Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge, its three most famous members, resided in the vicinity of the English lakes. The expression was at first used somewhat contemptuously, but in time it came to be looked upon as a fitting title for Wordsworth and his imitators.

Mr. Stopford Brooke does not approve of the title 'Lake Poets.' He says: 'Of all the poets misnamed Lake Poets, Wordsworth was the greatest.' Yet the title seems natural, and quite harmless in its way.

The necessity for earning a livelihood had led the young poet to take up journalism as a profession, when Calvert, a friend of his, died, leaving him a legacy of £900, with a request that he would devote himself to the work of a poet.

As a consequence of this piece of good fortune he settled down with his sister in Somersetshire, and not long afterwards made the acquaintance of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who became his bosom friend and companion. Coleridge went to live at Nether Stowey, and Wordsworth took a house at Alfoxden, three miles



away. Thus the two friends were enabled to see a great deal of each other.

Having taken a holiday in Germany, the poet went with his sister to Grasmere, in the neighbourhood of his childhood, where he resided for eight years. During this period he married, and wrote the beginning of his greatest poem, *The Excursion*. On the death of the Earl of Lonsdale, a sum of £8,500 was paid to the Wordsworth family, in liquidation of a debt. Of this sum the poet received £1,800. This enabled him to look forward to a life of comparative ease, in which he might devote some of his best energies to the cultivation of his muse. In 1808 he went to live at Allan Bank, and in 1813 he removed to Rydal Mount, where he spent the greater portion of his life.

‘A life of seclusion like Wordsworth’s,’ says one of his numerous biographers, ‘presents no incidents. At Rydal Mount, so long his residence, he lived apart amongst the hills, and surveyed with a philosopher’s eye the tempest of the world, undisturbed except by the roar of a rude review, over the flowers of his muse.’

It was the wish of Wordsworth’s friends that he should take Holy Orders, but his own inclinations did not tend in that direction. The love of poetry absorbed all his thoughts, and formed the grand passion of his life. Through the influence of Lord Lonsdale he was appointed Distributor of Stamps for the counties of Cumberland and Westmorland, at a salary of £500 a year; and being thus independent of the emoluments accruing from the exercise of his peculiar genius, which might have fallen short of a competency at times, he was enabled to indulge for half a century the bent of his poetic mind amid surroundings of inspiring beauty.

In 1835 the poet was awarded a pension of £300 a year by the Government of Sir Robert Peel, and he relinquished his post of Distributor of Stamps in favour of his son. On the death of Southey he was appointed Poet-Laureate, and in 1838 and 1839 the Universities of Durham and Oxford conferred upon him the honorary degree of D.C.L. He died at Rydal Mount on the anniversary of Shakespeare’s birth, the 23rd of April, 1850, and was laid to rest in the peaceful churchyard of Grasmere.

Wordsworth and his friend Coleridge struggled hard against the ridicule which was levelled against them and their little



'school.' The sneer passed away, and its place was taken by the smile of welcome, the nod of approval, and, finally, the applause of admiration and wonder. Thus, slowly but surely, the imaginings and philosophies of an entirely new cult won their way into popular esteem. Indeed, Wordsworth, though he seems to have been with us but yesterday, is already a classic. During the last fifty years his star has been steadily rising into the clear sky of popularity, and has perhaps not yet reached its zenith. Amongst his English contemporaries he stands foremost as the poet of common life and commonplace things and fancies. There are in his poems some traces of German inspiration, but in the main features of his verse we find clearly depicted specimens of all that is best in modern English poesy.

Dr. Collier thus graphically describes the method of Wordsworth: 'Choosing the simplest speech of educated Englishmen as a vehicle for the expression of their thoughts, and passing by with quiet scorn the used-up subjects of the Romancists—the military hero waving his red sword amid battle smoke; the assassin watching from the dark shadow of a vaulted doorway his unconscious victim, who strolls, singing in the white moonlight, down the empty street; the lover "sighing like furnace with a woeful ballad made to his mistress's eyebrow," and kindred themes—the poets of the Lake School took their subjects often from among the commonest things, and wrote their poems in the simplest style. Bending a reverent ear to the mysterious harmonies of Nature, to the ceaseless song of praise that rises from every blade of grass and every dewdrop, warbles in the fluting of every lark, and sweeps to heaven in every wave of air, they formed in their own deep hearts a musical echo of that song, and shaping into words the swelling of their inward faith, they spoke to the world in a way to which the world was little used, about things in which the world saw no poetic beauty. The history of a hard-hearted hawker of earthenware and his ass, the adventures of Betty Foy's idiot son, and the wanderings of an old pedlar, are among the themes chosen by Wordsworth for the utterance of his poetic soul. As of old the Puritans had done in political and domestic life, the Lakists went too far in their disdain for the conventional ornaments and subjects for poetry. But their theory, a healthful one, based on sound



principles, made an impression on the British mind deeper and more lasting than many think. Like that ozone or electrified oxygen in the natural air, upon which, say chemists, our health and spirits depend, its subtle influence is ever stealing through the atmosphere of our national thought, quickening the scattered germs of a truer and purer philosophy than has yet prevailed.'

Wordsworth's first appearance as an author was in 1793, when he published, 'hurriedly, though reluctantly,' two little poems, entitled respectively *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*. The former was written between the years 1787 and 1789, and contains a description of the scenery of the English lakes. The style of this essay, suggestive in a measure of Pope, is full of early promise, though not altogether 'finished.' The *Descriptive Sketches* were written at Blois and Orleans in 1791 and 1792. Amongst his subsequent works may be noted *Salisbury Plain*; or, *Guilt and Sorrow*, a portion of which, entitled *The Female Vagrant*, appeared in 1798, but which was not published *in extenso* until 1842. In 1798 Wordsworth and Coleridge produced between them a collection called *Lyrical Ballads*, which was designed to furnish funds for a little excursion. Of the twenty-three poems contained in this volume, Coleridge contributed *The Ancient Mariner*, *The Nightingale*, *The Foster-Mother's Tale*, and *The Dungeon*. The rest were by Wordsworth. This book is said to have 'fallen almost dead from the press,' and yet 'may be justly described as marking an epoch in our literature.'

During his sojourn at Grasmere Wordsworth produced a great deal of excellent poetry. He also wrote his historic Preface on Poetic Style and Diction for the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*. In this essay he tells us something of his own methods, declaring that his object was to ascertain how far the purposes of poetry might be fulfilled 'by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation.' He anxiously insists that all poetry is laid under 'a necessity of producing immediate pleasure,' and also dwells upon the fact or theory that 'the end of poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an overbalance of pleasure.' His dictum becomes questionable when he further asserts that the poet's function is limited to an exact representation of the natural and the real. Yet in the *Lyrical*



*Ballads* themselves there is scarce one which is not conspicuous for some ray of vivid poetic brilliance which a merely 'exact' representation would hardly set forth.

In 1807 appeared two volumes which contained his first sonnets, *The Happy Warrior*, *Intimations of Immortality*, the *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle*, and other notable poems. His greatest and most philosophical work, *The Excursion*, was published in 1814. Noble as it is in conception and execution, it is no more than a fragment of a projected moral epic which the poet had intended to designate *The Recluse*, and in which he had hoped to portray the profoundest secrets and highest aspirations of the human soul. Great as it unquestionably is, the number of those who read, and still more of those who understand, its depths of reasoning must always be limited. It is a poem for the thoughtful. The old Scotch pedlar and his companions are calculated to bore rather than interest or amuse the ordinary reader, who has not the time or the inclination to follow out the argument. To the careful student of the characteristics and destinies of his fellow-men, however, Wordsworth's masterpiece will ever furnish an unfailing source of profit and delight.

*The White Doe of Rylstone* was given to the world in 1815, and *Peter Bell* in 1819. Other works followed, such as *Yarrow Revisited*, and other *Poems*, *Ecclesiastical Sketches*, and *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent*. He was unsurpassed in the composition of the sonnet, a form of verse of which he was extremely fond. To use his own expression with regard to Milton :

' In his hand  
' The thing became a trumpet, whence he blew  
' Soul-animating strains.'

A sketch of Wordsworth would hardly be complete without some mention of the peculiar sweetness of such a poem as *We are Seven*, which alone would have called attention to his muse, and in which he sets forth with consummate skill a touching example of child philosophy.

A recent critic, Mr. Basil Worsfold, says that ' the frequent loss of poetic quality removes Wordsworth from the class of the supreme masters of song. On the other hand, the tendency to which it was due impelled him to a deeper significance of thought. If the weight of this thought is sometimes too heavy



for its literary vehicle to carry with perfect grace ; if he was unable to build up an epic like Milton : if he rarely invests his verse with the lyric enthusiasm of Shelley, he gave his poetry, as a whole, the sustaining fertility of philosophy, the freshness and vigour of original observation, and the tender sincerity of a life set four-square with the noblest aspirations of the race. When he is at his best, few wear the poet's robe more royally than he. 'Since Milton,' Coleridge writes, 'I know of no poet with so many felicities and unforgettable lines and stanzas as you.' And in truth it was Wordsworth that first among the poets of the nineteenth century fed his torch with the Elizabethan tradition of free art, and illumined a new region in the universe of mind.'

In an admirable and exhaustive work on Wordsworth recently issued by Mr. Walter Raleigh, we get a glance at the poet's personality. Like Tennyson, he was a dreamer who, in his exaltation of Nature as the best teacher of man, 'held fast to the loftiest conception of the poet's office, and advanced the largest claims for the poet's power to benefit mankind.' He loitered amongst the country folks of the Lake District 'in no mood of artless companionship, but intent on what he might learn ; he was an acolyte, not a boon-fellow.' What impression concerning his character was made upon his rustic neighbours may be gathered from one of Canon Rawnsley's *Reminiscences*, founded upon the recollections of an old innkeeper : 'Many's the time I've seed him a takin' his family out in a string, and niver geein' the deaniest bit of notice to 'em ; standin' by hisselt' and stoppin' behind agapin', wi' his jaws workin' the whoal time ; but niver no crackin' wi' 'em—a desolate-minded man, ye kna. . . . It was potry as did it.'

#### A SIMILE

Within the soul a faculty abides,  
That with interpositions, which would hide  
And darken, so can deal, that they become  
Contingencies of pomp ; and serve to exalt  
Her native brightness. As the ample Moon,  
In the deep stillness of a summer eve,  
Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,  
Burns like an unconsuming fire of light  
In the green trees ; and, kindling on all sides  
Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil  
Into a substance glorious as her own,



Yea, with her own incorporated, by power  
 Capacious and serene ; like power abides  
 In Man's celestial spirit ; Virtue thus  
 Sets forth and magnifies herself ; thus feeds  
 A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire,  
 From the incumbrances of mortal life,  
 From error, disappointment—nay, from guilt ;  
 And sometimes, so relenting Justice wills,  
 From palpable oppressions of Despair.

## THOUGHTS ON REVISITING THE WYE

Oh ! how oft,  
 In darkness, and amid the many shapes  
 Of joyless daylight, when the fretful stir  
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,  
 Have hung upon the beatings of my heart,  
 How oft in spirit have I turned to thee,  
 O sylvan Wye ! thou wanderer through the woods—  
 How often has my spirit turned to thee !  
 And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,  
 With many recognitions dim and faint,  
 And somewhat of a sad perplexity,  
 The picture of the mind revives again,  
 While here I stand, not only with the sense  
 Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts  
 That in this moment there is life and food  
 For future years. And so I dare to hope,  
 Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first  
 I came among these hills ; when, like a roe,  
 I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides  
 Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,  
 Wherever nature led ; more like a man  
 Flying from something that he dreads, than one  
 Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then—  
 The coarser pleasures of my boyish days  
 And their glad animal movements all gone by—  
 To me was all in all—I cannot paint  
 What then I was.

## HART-LEAP WELL

Hart-Leap Well is a small spring of water about five miles from Richmond in Yorkshire, and near the side of the road that leads from Richmond to Askrigg. Its name is derived from a remarkable Chase, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments spoken of in the second part of the following poem, which monuments do now exist as I have there described them.

The Knight had ridden down from Wensley Moor  
 With the slow motion of a summer's cloud ;  
 He turned aside towards a vassal's door,  
 And ' Bring another horse ! ' he cried aloud.

' Another horse ! '—That shout the vassal heard  
 And saddled his best steed, a comely gray ;  
 Sir Walter mounted him ; he was the third  
 Which he had mounted on that glorious day.



Joy sparkled in the prancing courser's eyes ;  
 The Horse and Horseman are a happy pair ;  
 But, though Sir Walter like a falcon flies,  
 There is a doleful silence in the air.

A rout this morning left Sir Walter's Hall,  
 That as they galloped made the echoes roar ;  
 But horse and man are vanished, one and all ;  
 Such race, I think, was never seen before.

Sir Walter, restless as a veering wind,  
 Calls to the few tired dogs that yet remain ;  
 Blanch, Swift, and Music, noblest of their kind,  
 Follow, and up the weary mountain strain.

The Knight hallooed, he cheered, and chid them on,  
 With suppliant gestures and upbraidings stern ;  
 But breath and eyesight fail ; and, one by one,  
 The dogs are stretched among the mountain fern.

Where is the throng, the tumult of the race ?  
 The bugles that so joyfully were blown ?  
 This Chase it looks not like an earthly Chase ;  
 Sir Walter and the Hart are left alone.

The poor hart toils along the mountain side ;  
 I will not stop to tell how far he fled,  
 Nor will I mention by what death he died ;  
 But now the Knight beholds him lying dead.

Dismounting then, he leaned against a thorn ;  
 He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor boy :  
 He neither cracked his whip, nor blew his horn,  
 But gazed upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter leaned,  
 Stood his dumb partner in this glorious feat ;  
 Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yeaned ;  
 And white with foam as if with cleaving sleet.

Upon his side the hart was lying stretched :  
 His nostril touched a spring beneath a hill,  
 And with the last deep groan his breath had fetched  
 The waters of the spring were trembling still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest,  
 (Never had living man such joyful lot !)  
 Sir Walter walked all round, north, south, and west,  
 And gazed and gazed upon that darling spot.

And climbing up the hill—(it was at least  
 Nine roods of sheer ascent) Sir Walter found  
 Three several hoof-marks which the hunted beast  
 Had left imprinted on the grassy ground.

Sir Walter wiped his face, and cried, ' Till now  
 Such sight was never seen by living eyes :  
 Three leaps have borne him from this lofty brow,  
 Down to the very fountain where he lies.



' I'll build a pleasure-house upon this spot,  
 And a small arbour, made for rural joy ;  
 'Twill be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's cot,  
 A place of love for damsels that are coy.  
  
 ' A cunning artist will I have to frame  
 A basin for that Fountain in the dell !  
 And they who do make mention of the same,  
 From this day forth, shall call it HART-LEAP WELL.  
  
 ' And, gallant Stag ! to make thy praises known,  
 Another monument shall here be raised ;  
 Three several Pillars, each a rough-hewn stone,  
 And planted where thy hoofs the turf have grazed.  
  
 ' And in the summer-time when days are long,  
 I will come hither with my paramour ;  
 And with the danciers and the minstrel's song  
 We will make merry in that pleasant bower.  
  
 ' Till the foundations of the mountains fail  
 My Mansion with its arbour shall endure :—  
 The joy of them who till the fields of Swale,  
 And them who dwell among the woods of Ure !'  
  
 Then home he went, and left the hart, stone-dead,  
 With breathless nostrils stretched above the spring.—  
 Soon did the Knight perform what he had said,  
 And far and wide the fame thereof did ring.  
  
 Ere thrice the Moon into her port had steered,  
 A Cup of stone received the living Well ;  
 Three Pillars of rude stone Sir Walter reared,  
 And built a House of Pleasure in the dell.  
  
 And near the fountain, flowers of stature tall,  
 With trailing plants and trees were intertwined,—  
 Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,  
 A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.  
  
 And thither, when the summer-days were long,  
 Sir Walter led his wondering paramour ;  
 And with the danciers and the minstrel's song  
 Made merriment within that pleasant bower.  
  
 The Knight, Sir Walter, died in course of time,  
 And his bones lie in his paternal vale.—  
 But there is matter for a second rhyme,  
 And I to this would add another tale.

## PART SECOND

The moving accident is not my trade ;  
 To freeze the blood I have no ready arts ;  
 'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,  
 To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts.  
  
 As I from Hawes to Richmond did repair,  
 It chanced that I saw standing in a dell  
 Three aspens at three corners of a square ;  
 And one, not four yards distant, near a well.



## A HISTORY OF BRITISH POETRY

What this imported I could ill divine :  
 And, pulling now the rein my horse to stop,  
 I saw three pillars standing in a line,  
 The last stone pillar on a dark hilltop.

The trees were gray, with neither arms nor head ;  
 Half-wasted the square mound of tawny green ;  
 So that you just might say, as then I said,  
 ' Here in old time the hand of man hath been.'

I looked upon the hill both far and near,  
 More doleful place did never eye survey ;  
 It seemed as if the spring-time came not here,  
 And Nature here were willing to decay.

I stood in various thoughts and fancies lost,  
 When one, who was in shepherd's garb attired,  
 Came up the hollow :—him did I accost,  
 And what this place might be I then inquired.

The Shepherd stopped, and that same story told  
 Which in my former rhyme I have rehearsed.  
 ' A jolly place,' said he, ' in times of old !  
 But something ails it now ; the spot is cursed.

' You see these lifeless stumps of aspen wood—  
 Some say that they are beeches, others elms—  
 These were the bower ; and here a mansion stood,  
 The finest palace of a hundred realms !

' The arbour does its own condition tell ;  
 You see the stones, the fountain, and the Stream ;  
 But as to the great lodge ! you might as well  
 Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

' There's neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep,  
 Will wet his lips within that cup of stone ;  
 And oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,  
 This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

Some say that here a murder has been done,  
 And blood cries out for blood : but, for my part,  
 I've guessed, when I've been sitting in the sun,  
 That it was all for that unhappy hart.

' What thoughts must through the creature's brain have past !  
 Even from the topmost stone, upon the steep,  
 Are but three bounds—and look, Sir, at this last—  
 —O Master ! it has been a cruel leap.

' For thirteen hours he ran a desperate race ;  
 And in my simple mind we cannot tell  
 What cause the hart might have to love this place,  
 And come and make his deathbed near the Well.

' Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,  
 Lulled by this fountain in the summer-tide ;  
 This water was perhaps the first he drank  
 When he had wandered from his mother's side.



‘ In April here beneath the scented thorn  
 He heard the birds their morning carols sing ;  
 And he, perhaps, for aught we know, was born  
 Not half a furlong from that self-same spring.

‘ Now, here is neither grass nor pleasant shade ;  
 The sun on drearier hollow never shone ;  
 So will it be, as I have often said,  
 Till trees, and stones, and fountain, all are gone.’

‘ Gray-headed Shepherd, thou hast spoken well ;  
 Small difference lies between thy creed and mine :  
 This beast not unobserved by Nature fell ;  
 His death was mourned by sympathy divine.

‘ The Being, that is in the clouds and air,  
 That is in the green leaves among the groves,  
 Maintains a deep and reverential care  
 For the unoffending creatures whom He loves.

‘ The pleasure-house is dust :—behind, before,  
 This is no common waste, no common gloom ;  
 But Nature, in due course of time, once more  
 Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

‘ She leaves these objects to a slow decay,  
 That what we are, and have been, may be known ;  
 But, at the coming of the milder day,  
 These monuments shall all be overgrown.

‘ One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,  
 Taught both by what she shows, and what conceals,  
 Never to blend our pleasure or our pride  
 With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.’

#### THE REDBREAST AND THE BUTTERFLY

Art thou the Bird whom Man loves best,  
 The pious Bird with the scarlet breast,  
 Our little English Robin ;  
 The Bird that comes about our doors  
 When Autumn winds are sobbing ?  
 Art thou the Peter of Norway boors ?  
 Their Thomas in Finland,  
 And Russia far inland ?

The Bird, who by some name or other  
 All men who know thee call their Brother,  
 The Darling of children and men ?  
 Could Father Adam<sup>1</sup> open his eyes  
 And see the sight beneath the skies,  
 He’d wish to close them again.

If the Butterfly knew but his friend,  
 Hither his flight he would bend ;  
 And find his way to me,  
 Under the branches of the tree :

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See *Paradise Lost*, Book XI., where Adam points out to Eve the ominous sign of the eagle chasing ‘two birds of gayest plume,’ and the gentle hart and hind pursued by their enemy. ;



## A HISTORY OF BRITISH POETRY

In and out, he darts about ;  
 Can this be the bird, to man so good,  
 That after their bewildering,  
 Covered with leaves the little Children,  
     So painfully in the wood ?

What ailed thee, Robin, that thou could'st pursue  
     A beautiful Creature,  
 That is gentle by Nature ?  
 Beneath the summer sky  
 From flower to flower let him fly ;  
 'Tis all that he wishes to do.  
 The cheerer thou of our indoor sadness,  
 He is the friend of our summer gladness ;  
 What hinders, then, that ye should be  
 Playmates in the sunny weather,  
 And fly about in the air together ?  
 His beautiful wings in crimson are drest,  
 A crimson as bright as thine own :  
 If thou would'st be happy in thy nest,  
 O pious Bird ! whom man loves best,  
 Love him or leave him alone !

## THE PET LAMB

## A PASTORAL

The dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink ;  
 I heard a voice ; it said, ' Drink, pretty creature, drink !'  
 And, looking o'er the hedge, before me I espied  
 A snow-white mountain lamb with a maiden at its side.

No other sheep were near, the lamb was all alone,  
 And by a slender cord was tethered to a stone ;  
 With one knee on the grass did the little maiden kneel,  
 While to that mountain lamb she gave its evening meal.

The lamb, while from her hand he thus his supper took,  
 Seemed to feast with head and ears ; and his tail with pleasure shook.  
 ' Drink, pretty creature, drink,' she said in such a tone  
 That I almost received her heart into my own.

'Twas little Barbara Lewthwaite, a child of beauty rare !  
 I watched them with delight, they were a lovely pair.  
 Now with her empty can the maiden turned away :  
 But ere ten yards were gone her footsteps did she stay.

Towards the lamb she looked ; and from that shady place  
 I unobserved could see the workings of her face :  
 If Nature to her tongue could measured numbers bring,  
 Thus, thought I, to her lamb that little maid might sing :

' What ails thee, young one ? what ? Why pull so at thy cord ?  
 Is it not well with thee ? well both for bed and board ?  
 Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as grass can be :  
 Rest, little young one, rest ; what is't that aileth thee ?

' What is it thou wouldst seek ? What is wanting to thy heart ?  
 Thy limbs are they not strong ? And beautiful thou art :  
 This grass is tender grass ; these flowers they have no peers ;  
 And that green corn all day is rustling in thy ears !



' If the Sun be shining hot, do but stretch thy woollen chain,  
This beech is standing by, its covert thou canst gain ;  
For rain and mountain storms ! the like thou need'st not fear—  
The rain and storm are things that scarcely can come here.

' Rest, little young one, rest ; thou hast forgot the day  
When my father found thee first in places far away ;  
Many flocks were on the hills, but thou wert owned by none,  
And thy mother from thy side for evermore was gone.

' He took thee in his arms, and in pity brought thee home :  
A blessed day for thee ! then whither would'st thou roam ?  
A faithful nurse thou hast ; the dam that did thee yearn  
Upon the mountain tops no kinder could have been.

' Thou knowest that twice a day I have brought thee in this can  
Fresh water from the brook, as clear as ever ran ;  
And twice in the day, when the ground is wet with dew,  
I bring thee draughts of milk, warm milk it is and new.

' Thy limbs will shortly be twice as stout as they are now,  
Then I'll yoke thee to my cart like a pony in the plough ;  
My playmate thou shalt be ; and when the wind is cold  
Our hearth shall be thy bed, our house shall be thy fold.

' It will not, will not rest !—Poor creature, can it be  
That 'tis thy mother's heart which is working so in thee ?  
Things that I know not of belike to thee are dear,  
And dreams of things which thou canst neither see nor hear.

' Alas, the mountain tops that look so green and fair !  
I've heard of fearful winds and darkness that come there ;  
The little brooks that seem all pastime and all play,  
When they are angry, roar like lions for their prey.

' Here thou need'st not dread the raven in the sky ;  
Night and day thou art safe,—our cottage is hard by.  
Why bleat so after me ? Why pull so at thy chain ?  
Sleep—and at break of day I will come to thee again !'

—As homeward through the lane I went with lazy feet,  
This song to myself did I oftentimes repeat ;  
And it seemed, as I retraced the ballad line by line,  
That but half of it was hers, and one half of it was *mine*.

Again, and once again, did I repeat the song ;  
' Nay,' said I, ' more than half to the *Damsel* must belong,  
For she looked with such a look, and she spake with such a tone,  
That I almost received her heart into my own.'

#### WE ARE SEVEN

A simple child,  
That lightly draws its breath,  
And feels its life in every limb,  
What should it know of death ?

I met a little cottage girl :  
She was eight years old, she said ;  
Her hair was thick with many a curl  
That clustered round her head.



## A HISTORY OF BRITISH POETRY

She had a rustic, woodland air,  
 And she was wildly clad ;  
 Her eyes were fair, and very fair ;  
 Her beauty made me glad.

' Sisters and brothers, little maid,  
 How many may you be ?'  
 ' How many ? Seven in all,' she said,  
 And wondering looked at me.

' And where are they ? I pray you tell  
 She answered, ' Seven are we ;  
 And two of us at Conway dwell,  
 And two are gone to sea.

' Two of us in the churchyard lie,  
 My sister and my brother ;  
 And, in the churchyard cottage, I  
 Dwell near them with my mother.'

' You say that two at Conway dwell,  
 And two are gone to sea,  
 Yet ye are seven !—I pray you tell,  
 Sweet maid, how this may be.'

Then did the little maid reply,  
 ' Seven boys and girls are we ;  
 Two of us in the churchyard lie,  
 Beneath the churchyard tree.'

' You run about, my little maid,  
 Your limbs they are alive ;  
 If two are in the churchyard laid,  
 Then ye are only five.'

' Their graves are green, they may be seen,'  
 The little maid replied,  
 ' Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,  
 And they are side by side.

' My stockings there I often knit,  
 My kerchief there I hem ;  
 And there upon the ground I sit—  
 I sit and sing to them.

' And often after sunset, sir,  
 When it is light and fair,  
 I take my little porringer,  
 And eat my supper there.

' The first that died was little Jane ;  
 In bed she moaning lay,  
 Till God released her of her pain ;  
 And then she went away.

' So in the churchyard she was laid ;  
 And when the grass was dry,  
 Together round her grave we played,  
 My brother John and I.



' And when the ground was white with snow,  
And I could run and slide,  
My brother John was forced to go,  
And he lies by her side.'

' How many are you then,' said I,  
If they two are in heaven ?'  
The little maiden did reply,  
' O master ! we are seven.'

' But they are dead ; those two are dead !  
Their spirits are in heaven !'  
'Twas throwing words away ; for still  
The little maid would have her will,  
And said, ' Nay, we are seven !'

### SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

1772-1834

THE subject of this sketch has been described as ' the most imaginative of modern poets.' The youngest son of the Vicar of Ottery St. Mary, in Devonshire, he was born on the 21st of October, 1772. Left an orphan at an early age, he obtained, through the influence of a friend, an entry to Christ's Hospital, from whence he proceeded in due course to Jesus College, Cambridge, in his nineteenth year. He took no honours at the University, for, though passionately addicted to reading, his methods were too desultory to be of use to him in the examination hall. At this time, too, he imbibed opinions which did more than savour of Socinianism, and this still further interfered with his prospects of distinction. In his second year of student life he fled from his college and enlisted, under the assumed name of Comberbach, in the 15th Dragoons. After two months he grew tired of soldiering, and appealed to his friends, who bought him out. He returned to Cambridge, but subsequently left the University in December, 1794, without having obtained a degree.

Coleridge now attached himself to Southey and another young poet named Lovell. Amongst them they conceived a curious and somewhat Utopian scheme, which proved abortive, happily for its authors. Coleridge was the originator of the quaint idea. He proposed that they should go to the banks of the Susquehanna, in North America, and found there a model republic, which should be a home of universal unselfishness, in which there should be absolute equality amongst the inhabi-



tants and a community of goods. The system of government, or lack of it, was to be called 'Pantisocracy.' But sufficient funds were not forthcoming to carry the scheme into effect. The French Revolution was at the bottom of this wild conceit, the youth of Britain being at this time strangely animated and fired by the new doctrines of liberty being inculcated in unhappy France. The three friends found solace for their failure in a little while. They entered the bonds of matrimony with three sisters at Bristol, and their republicanism made way for more serious pursuits. Southey went to Portugal, and Coleridge turned his attention to literature in all seriousness, intending to make it his profession. He made the acquaintance of Wordsworth in the South of England, an acquaintance which rapidly ripened into a close friendship.

Coleridge's first venture in publication appeared in 1796. It consisted of a small volume of poems, which Joseph Cottle, a bookseller at Bristol, had purchased from him for the sum of thirty guineas. Up to this time he had merely contributed occasional poems to a London paper. In 1798 he contributed his poem *The Ancient Mariner* to Wordsworth's collection of *Lyrical Ballads*, and in the same year he went for a while to Germany to mature his studies in the history of literature. On his return he went to live in the Lake District, near Wordsworth's home, thus becoming a member of what is known as the Lake School of Poetry. In 1804 and 1805 he acted as secretary to Sir Alexander Ball in Malta, returning again to the lakes, which he finally left in 1812, leaving his family to the care of Southey. Thereafter he lived in London, and died at Highgate, in the house of a Mr. Gillman, on the 25th of July, 1834.

Like many great literary geniuses, Coleridge had a weakness which interfered in a great measure with the exercise of his philosophic and poetical gifts. This weakness is thus described by Mr. Scrymgeour :

'His habits of mind and business rendered his lectures and his publications unprofitable to himself and disastrous to his publishers. Opium-eating, into which he had been seduced by its alleged medicinal effects, had gradually unhinged the structure of his mind ; he became an exile from his family and his dearest friends, and lived a species of haphazard life till he



had firmness enough to place himself, for the cure of his unfortunate habit, under the charge of Mr. Gillman, surgeon, Highgate. In the bosom of that gentleman's affectionate family he lived till his death, delighting troops of admiring friends by the miracles of his conversation. During this period his most important works were published; he was overcoming his infirmity; his shattered nature was restored to a wholesome religious tone; his philosophy was tempering into tangibleness and utility. . . . The great beauty of his mind, both in its error and its orthodoxy, was its simplicity of religious earnestness, and the single eye with which through much error it panted after truth. His capital defect was want of energetic will, which inflicted misery on his family, and on himself heart-rending remorse.'

The works of Coleridge have been compared most aptly to an unfinished city. Almost all his poems are fragmentary. They are powerfully suggestive of the 'might have been.' Magnificent incompleteness is the highest epithet which can justly be used concerning them. *Christabel*, a lovely narrative poem, is unfinished. *The Ancient Mariner*, accounted by some critics the most splendid and complete of his essays in verse, has been accused by others of furnishing an insufficient moral. But his *Hymn to Mont Blanc*, his *Odes*, and other minor works, are gems of their kind. The highest tribute which the historian can pay to the genius of this truly great writer may be paid, perhaps, in a mention of the fact that he was admired, and even imitated, by Byron and Scott.

#### YOUTH AND AGE

Verse, a breeze 'mid blossoms straying,  
 Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee—  
 Both were mine! Life went a-maying  
 With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,  
                   When I was young!  
 When I was young?—Ah, woful when!  
 Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and Then!  
 This breathing house not built with hands,  
   This body that does me grievous wrong,  
 O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands  
   How lightly then it flash'd along:  
 Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,  
   On winding lakes and rivers wide,  
 That ask no aid of sail or oar,  
   That fear no spite of wind or tide!  
 Nought cared this body for wind or weather  
 When Youth and I lived in't together.



Flowers are lovely ; Love is flower-like ;  
 Friendship is a sheltering tree ;  
 O ! the joys, that came down shower-like  
 Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,  
     Ere I was old !

Ere I was old ? Ah, woful Ere,  
 Which tells me, Youth's no longer here !  
 O Youth ! for years so many and sweet  
 'Tis known that Thou and I were one,  
 I'll think it but a fond conceit—  
     It cannot be, that Thou art gone !

Thy vesper-bell hath not yet toll'd :—  
 And thou wert aye a masker bold !  
 What strange disguise hast now put on,  
 To make believe that thou art gone ?  
 ' see these locks in silvery slips,  
     This drooping gait, this alter'd size :  
 But Springtide blossoms on thy lips,  
     And tears take sunshine from thine eyes !  
 Life is but Thought : so think I will  
 That Youth and I are housemates still.

Dewdrops are the gems of morning,  
 But the tears of mournful eve !  
 Where no hope is, life's a warning  
     That only serves to make us grieve  
     When we are old :

—That only serves to make us grieve  
 With oft and tedious taking-leave ;  
     Like some poor nigh-related guest,  
     That may not rudely be dismiss'd,  
 Yet hath outstay'd his welcome while,  
 And tells the jest without the smile.

#### CHILD'S EVENING PRAYER

Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,  
 God grant me grace my prayers to say !  
 O God, preserve my mother dear  
 In health and strength for many a year,  
 And oh, preserve my father too,  
 And may I pay him rev'rence due ;  
 And may I my best thoughts employ  
 To be my parents' hope and joy !  
 My sisters and my brothers both  
 From evil guard, and save from sloth,  
 And may we always love each other,  
 Our friends, our father, and our mother !  
 And still, O Lord, to me impart  
 A contrite, pure, and grateful heart,  
 That after my last sleep I may  
 Awake to Thy eternal day. Amen.

#### HYMN BEFORE SUNRISE IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI

Hast thou a charm to stay the morning-star  
 In his steep course ? So long he seems to pause  
 On thy bald, awful head, O sovran Blanc !  
 The Arve and Arveiron at thy base  
 Rave ceaselessly ; but thou, most awful Form !  
 Risest from forth thy silent sea of pines,



How silently ! Around thee and above,  
 Deep is the air and dark, substantial, black,  
 An ebon mass : methinks thou piercest it,  
 As with a wedge ! But when I look again,  
 It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,  
 Thy habitation from eternity !  
 O dread and silent Mount ! I gazed upon thee,  
 Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,  
 Didst vanish from my thought : entranced in prayer,  
 I worshipp'd the Invisible alone.

Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody,  
 So sweet we know not we are list'ning to it,  
 Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with my thought,  
 Yea, with my life and life's own secret joy,  
 Till the dilating Soul, enrapt, transfused  
 Into the mighty vision passing—there,  
 As in her natural form swell'd vast to Heaven !  
 Awake, my soul ! not only passive praise  
 Thou owest ! not alone these swelling tears,  
 Mute thanks, and secret ecstasy ! Awake,  
 Voice of sweet song ! Awake, my heart, awake !  
 Green vales and icy cliffs, all join my hymn !

Thou first and chief, sole sovran of the vale !  
 Oh, struggling with the darkness all the night,  
 And visited all night by troops of stars,  
 Or when they climb the sky, or when they sink :  
 Companion of the morning-star at dawn,  
 Thyself earth's rosy star, and of the dawn  
 Co-herald ! wake, oh wake, and utter praise !  
 Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in earth ?  
 Who fill'd thy countenance with rosy light ?  
 Who made thee parent of perpetual streams ?  
 And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely glad !  
 Who call'd you forth from night and utter death  
 From dark and icy caverns call'd you forth,  
 Down those precipitous, black, jagged rocks,  
 For ever shatter'd, and the same for ever ?  
 Who gave you your invulnerable life,  
 Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy,  
 Unceasing thunder and eternal foam ?  
 And who commanded (and the silence came),  
 Here let the billows stiffen, and have rest ?

Ye ice-falls ! ye that from the mountain's brow  
 Adown enormous ravines slope amain—  
 Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,  
 And stopp'd at once amid their maddest plunge !  
 Motionless torrents ! silent cataracts !  
 Who made you glorious as the gates of heaven  
 Beneath the keen, full moon ? Who bade the sun  
 Clothe you with rainbows ? Who with living flowers,  
 Of loveliest hue, spread garlands at your feet !  
 God ! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,  
 Answer ! and let the ice-plains echo, God !  
 God ! sing, ye meadow-streams, with gladsome voice !  
 Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds !  
 And they, too, have a voice, yon piles of snow,  
 And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God !  
 Ye living flowers that skirt th' eternal frost !  
 Ye wild goats sporting round the eagle's nest !  
 Ye eagles, playmates of the mountain storm !



Ye lightnings, the dread arrows of the clouds !  
 Ye signs and wonders of the element !  
 Utter forth ' God,' and fill the hills with praise !  
 Thou too, hoar Mount ! with thy sky-pointing peaks,  
 Oft from whose feet the avalanche, unheard,  
 Shoots downward, glittering through the pure serene,  
 Into the depth of clouds that veil thy breast—  
 Thou too, again, stupendous Mountain ! thou,  
 That, as I raise my head, awhile bow'd low  
 In adoration, upward from thy base  
 Slow travelling with dim eyes suffused with tears,  
 Solemnly seemest, like a vapoury cloud,  
 To rise before me—rise, oh, ever rise,  
 Rise like a cloud of incense, from the earth !  
 Thou kingly spirit throned among the hills,  
 Thou dread ambassador from Earth to Heaven,  
 Great Hierarch ! tell thou the silent sky,  
 And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,  
 Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God !

#### THE NIGHTINGALE

A melancholy bird ? Oh ! idle thought—  
 In nature there is nothing melancholy.  
 But some night-wandering man, whose heart was pierced  
 With the remembrance of some grievous wrong,  
 Or slow distemper, or neglected love ;  
 (And so, poor wretch ! fill'd all things with himself,  
 And made all gentle sounds send back the tale  
 Of his own sorrow) ; he, and such as he,  
 First named these notes a melancholy strain,  
 And many a poet echoes the conceit.

We have learnt

A different lore : we may not thus profane  
 Nature's sweet voices, always full of love  
 And joyance. 'Tis the merry nightingale  
 That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates,  
 With fast thick warble, his delicious notes,  
 As he were fearful that an April night  
 Would be too short for him to utter forth  
 His love-chant, and disburden his full soul  
 Of all its music.

#### FROM 'FROST AT MIDNIGHT'

Dear babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,  
 Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,  
 Fill up the interspersed vacancies  
 And momentary pauses of the thought !  
 My babe so beautiful ! it thrills my heart  
 With tender gladness thus to look at thee,  
 And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,  
 And in far other scenes ! For I was reared  
 In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,  
 And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.  
 But thou, my babe, shalt wander like a breeze  
 By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags  
 Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,



Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores  
 And mountain crags : so shalt thou see and hear  
 The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible  
 Of that eternal language which thy God  
 Utters, who from eternity doth teach  
 Himself in all, and all things in Himself.  
 Great universal Teacher ! He shall mould  
 Thy spirit, and, by giving, make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,  
 Whether the summer clothe the general earth  
 With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing  
 Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch  
 Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch  
 Smokes in the sun-thaw ; whether the eve-drops fall,  
 Heard only in the trances of the blast,  
 Or if the secret ministry of frost  
 Shall hang them up in silent icicles,  
 Quietly shining to the quiet moon.

## ROBERT SOUTHEY

1774-1843

THE number of volumes produced by Robert Southey can only be described as prodigious. They numbered in all 109. But even this fact in itself does not convey an adequate idea of the labour involved in writing the books referred to. In calculating that we must remember that they are all books which involved laboured research. Many works would doubtless be consulted before one of Southey's volumes could be produced. This prolific writer was born in Wine Street, Bristol, on the 12th of August, 1774. His father was a linen draper in that city, but the future poet spent a great portion of his childhood with the members of his mother's family. After passing through several local schools, he was sent in 1788 to Westminster School at the expense of his uncle, the Rev. Herbert Hill. At that celebrated seat of learning he lost some valuable time in a somewhat futile endeavour to acquire a knowledge of classics, a branch of study for the pursuit of which he had laid no proper foundation previously. Having spent four years there, he incurred the displeasure of the masters by writing in the school magazine (which he and a friend had instituted) an offensive article denouncing the system of flogging in public schools. For this indiscretion he was very promptly expelled. Within the next twelve months



he went to Oxford, and matriculated at Balliol College. Here he was not much more successful with his Latin and Greek than he had been at school. Two years were spent at the University, during which time he, if we may believe his own account of himself, only learned two things worth mentioning, namely, how to row and how to swim. But during that time he made the acquaintance of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. These two kindred spirits, 'both smitten by the widening swell of the French Revolution, rank republicans in political creed, and Unitarians in religious profession, formed, in conjunction with others, the wild American scheme' to which reference is made in our sketch of the career of Coleridge. Southey, Coleridge, and Lovell (also a 'Pantisocrat') married three sisters whom they had met at Bristol. The support of the three ladies devolved very soon upon Southey, Lovell having died, and Coleridge indulging too frequently in absenteeism as far as his wife and family were concerned. The American scheme fell through for want of funds, an attempt on the part of Southey and Lovell to raise the wind by the sale of a volume of poems having proved unsuccessful. This collection was published under the assumed names of Bion and Moschus.

Southey had written a poem at Oxford which he called *Joan of Arc*. He now sold it for fifty guineas to an obliging bookseller of Bristol named Cottle, but it required some overhauling before it could be considered 'up to publication standard,' and while this was being done the young author was obliged to give lectures on History at Bristol, in order to keep himself from absolute want. But in spite of these efforts he was obliged to return to his mother's house in 1795. His republican leanings had also led him to write a somewhat seditious poem called *Wat Tyler*, which, years afterwards, when he was Poet-Laureate, a publisher issued in order to annoy him.

In 1795 he went to Lisbon with his uncle, who was chaplain to the British Factory in that city. He remained there for six months, after which he returned to London, and began to study law at Gray's Inn. In 1800 he again visited Lisbon for a brief sojourn with his uncle. Soon after his return he was appointed private secretary to the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer, a post worth £350 a year, but this he only held for six months. He now devoted himself exclusively to literary work, settling



down at Greta Hall, near Keswick, in 1803. 'From being a sceptic and a republican he became a firm believer in Christianity, and a staunch supporter of the English Church and Constitution, and many of his works and essays in the *Quarterly Review* were written in defence of the doctrines and discipline of the Church.'

On the death of Pye, in 1813, Southey was appointed Poet-Laureate, Sir Walter Scott having declined the honour. In 1821 he was honoured by the University of Oxford with the degree of LL.D. Sir Robert Peel offered him a baronetcy, which he declined, but he accepted at the hands of the Government a pension of £300 a year. In 1839 he entered a second time into the bonds of matrimony, the lady of his choice this time being the poetess Caroline Bowles, who was then fifty-two years of age. She was just in time to act as his nurse, for his health began soon to give way, physically and mentally. For the last three years of his life his mind was a total blank, and he breathed his last at Greta on the 21st of March, 1843.

*Joan of Arc* was not ready for the press until 1795. It was favourably received, in spite of its republican principles. It certainly displays unquestionable genius in its workmanship. *Madoc* appeared in 1805, though it had been written some years previously. These two poems are written in blank verse. The author seems to have set some value on *Madoc* as a specimen of his poetic gift, for we are told that on it he is 'content to rest his fame.' It is a powerful and picturesque tale of a Welsh prince of the twelfth century whom he represents as discovering and conquering Mexico. Its wonders are fascinating but improbable. On the whole the poem is inferior in conception and treatment to *The Curse of Kehama*, which is his finest production. The latter, published in 1810, is a tale of Hindoo mythology. Dr. Collier gives us the following account of its plot:

'In verse of most irregular music, but completely suited to his fantastic theme, he leads to the terrestrial paradise—to the realms below the sea—to the heaven of heavens, and, in a sublime passage, through adamantine rock, lit with a furnace glow, into Padalon, the Indian Hades. We follow the strange career of Kehama, a Hindoo Rajah, who by penance and self-inflicted torture raises himself to a level with Brahma and Vishnu; we suffer with the poor mortal, who is burdened with the spell of a terrible curse laid on him by the enchanter, and we



rejoice in his final deliverance and restoration to his family. Various Hindoo gods, a ghost, a benevolent spirit, and a woman, who receives immortality at the end, are among the *dramatis personæ*. Scenery and costume, situations and sentiments, are alike in keeping with the Oriental nature of the work. But for all its splendour and all its correctness as a work of art it is so far removed from the world in which our sympathies lie that few can fully appreciate this noble poem, and perhaps none can return to it with never-wearied love, as to a play of Shakespeare or a novel by Scott.'

Four years after the publication of *Kehama* Southey again courted public favour by the production of *Roderick, the Last of the Goths*. This powerful poem is written in blank verse, and is not so extravagant in conception as *Kehama*. It deals with the punishments which overtook the last Gothic King of Spain, 'whose vices, oppressions, and in particular an insult offered to the virtue of Florinda, daughter of Count Julian, incited that noble to betray his country to the Moors.' The Spaniards rose in revolt against their Moslem oppressors, and the King, adopting the disguise of a hermit, appears in many of the scenes, and 'his agonizing repentance for his past crimes, and humble trust in the mercy of God, form the materials of the action.'

Southey was conscientious in the discharge of his duties as Poet-Laureate, and his loyalty as expressed in his official writings is in strong contrast to his previous revolutionary principles. Like his friend Coleridge, he had laid aside his Jacobinism and Socinianism with his youth. His smaller poems, such as *Mary, the Maid of the Inn*, *The Holly Tree*, etc., exhibit every grace of genuine and polished poetry. *Thalaba*, an important poem, is spoken of very favourably by such critics as Shaw and Chambers.

At his death Southey left behind him four children, and a comfortable fortune amounting to £12,000.

Almost every critic dwells upon the obvious faults of his poetry, though all acknowledge his originality and power of delineation. From a multitude of expressions of mingled praise and blame we venture to quote the following, which savours strongly of absolute fairness :

'Southey shipwrecked his poetry on his scholarship ; he used too much the "spectacles of books" ; the gilding and regilding



of his eloquence fatigues with its splendour ; his greater poems have no relief ; the mouth of his reader's mind is perpetually crammed to choking ; his words frequently serve rather as a splendid case for a little thought than as a crystal lantern to transmit the intellectual light in the tempered harmony of its outline. His eloquence lies too often in the rhetoric of the words merely ; any reader will be sensible of this who compares Campbell's *Dirge of Wallace* with Southey's verses on a similar subject. His characters have not sufficiently distinctive features. In *Madoc*, except by names, the hearer could not distinguish Welshmen from Americans ; or, in *Roderick*, Moors from Spaniards. Notwithstanding these defects, the intellectual wealth of Southey's mind, his graceful skill in gorgeous ornament, the purity of his English style, and his sympathy with all that is noble and virtuous in history and humanity, render him a poet of great practical use to the student. . . . It is only among those whose attainments enable them to appreciate him that Southey, so far as regards the mass of his poetry, will be probably a favourite.'

#### THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM

It was a summer evening,  
 Old Kaspar's work was done,  
 And he before his cottage door  
 Was sitting in the sun ;  
 And by him sported on the green  
 His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin  
 Roll something large and round,  
 That he beside the rivulet,  
 In playing there, had found ;  
 He came to ask what he had found,  
 That was so large, and smooth, and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,  
 Who stood expectant by ;  
 And then the old man shook his head,  
 And with a natural sigh,  
 ' 'Tis some poor fellow's skull,' said he,  
 ' Who fell in the great victory.

' I find them in the garden, for  
 There's many here about,  
 And often when I go to plough,  
 The ploughshare turns them out !  
 For many thousand men,' said he,  
 ' Were slain in the great victory.'



' Now tell us what 'twas all about,'  
 Young Peterkin he cries,  
 And little Wilhelmine looks up  
 With wonder-waiting eyes ;  
 ' Now tell us all about the war,  
 And what they kill'd each other for.'

' It was the English,' Kaspar cried,  
 ' That put the French to rout ;  
 But what they kill'd each other for,  
 I could not well make out.  
 But everybody said,' quoth he,  
 ' That 'twas a famous victory.

' My father lived at Blenheim then,  
 Yon little stream hard by ;  
 They burnt his dwelling to the ground.  
 And he was forced to fly ;  
 So with his wife and child he fled,  
 Nor had he where to rest his head.

' With fire and sword the country round  
 Was wasted far and wide,  
 And many a childing mother then,  
 And new-born baby, died.  
 But things like that, you know, must be  
 At every famous victory.

' They say it was a shocking sight,  
 After the field was won ;  
 For many thousand bodies here  
 Lay rotting in the sun ;  
 But things like that, you know, must be  
 After a famous victory.

' Great praise the Duke of Marlbro' won,  
 And our good Prince Eugene.'—  
 ' Why, 'twas a very wicked thing !'  
 Said little Wilhelmine.  
 ' Nay—nay—my little girl,' quoth h  
 ' It was a famous victory.

' And everybody praised the Duke  
 Who such a fight did win.  
 ' But what good came of it at last ?'  
 Quoth little Peterkin.  
 ' Why that I cannot tell,' said he,  
 ' But 'twas a famous victory.'

#### THE WELL OF ST. KEYNE

' I know not whether it be worth reporting that there is in Cornwall, near the parish of St. Neots, a well arched over with the robes of four kinds of trees, withy, oak, elm, and ash, dedicated to St. Keyne. The reported virtue of the water is this, that whether husband or wife come first to drink thereof, they get the mastery thereby.'—FULLER.

A well there is in the west-country,  
 And a clearer one never was seen ;  
 There is not a wife in the west-country  
 But has heard of the well of St. Keyne



An oak and an elm tree stand beside,  
 And behind does an ash-tree grow,  
 And a willow from the bank above  
 Droops to the water below.

A traveller came to the Well of St. Keyne ;  
 Joyfully he drew nigh ;  
 For from cock-crow he had been travelling,  
 And there was not a cloud in the sky.

He drank of the water so cool and clear, '  
 For thirsty and hot was he ;  
 And he sat down upon the bank,  
 Under the willow-tree.

There came a man from the house hard by,  
 At the well to fill his pail ;  
 On the well-side he rested it,  
 And he bade the stranger hail.

'Now art thou a bachelor, stranger ?' quoth he,  
 'For an if thou hast a wife,  
 The happiest draught thou hast drank this day  
 That ever thou didst in thy life.

'Or has thy good woman, if one thou hast,  
 Ever here in Cornwall been ?  
 For an if she have, I'll venture my life  
 She has drank of the Well of St. Keyne.'

'I have left a good woman who never was here,'  
 The stranger he made reply ;  
 'But that my draught should be better for that,  
 'I pray you answer me why.'

St. Keyne,' quoth the Cornishman, 'many a time  
 Drank of this crystal well,  
 And before the angel summon'd her  
 She laid on the water a spell.

'If the husband of this gifted well  
 Shall drink before his wife,  
 A happy man thenceforth is he,  
 For he shall be master for life.

'But if the wife should drink of it first,  
 God help the husband then !'  
 The stranger stoop'd to the Well of St. Keyne,  
 And drank of the water again.

'You drank of the well, I warrant, betimes ?'  
 He to the Cornishman said ;  
 But the Cornishman smiled as the stranger spake,  
 And sheepishly shook his head.

'I hasten'd as soon as the wedding was done  
 And left my wife in the porch.  
 But i' faith she had been wiser than me,  
 For she took a bottle to church.'



## THE FALLS OF LODORE

DESCRIBED IN 'RHYMES FOR THE NURSERY'

'How does the Water  
 Come down at Lodore ?'  
 My little boy ask'd me  
 Thus, once on a time ;  
 And moreover he task'd me  
 To tell him in rhyme.  
 Anon at the word,  
 There first came one daughter  
 And then came another,  
 To second and third  
 The request of their brother,  
 And to hear how the water  
 Comes down at Lodore,  
 With its rush and its roar,  
 As many a time  
 They had seen it before.  
 So I told them in rhyme,  
 For of rhymes I had store :  
 And 'twas in my vocation  
 For their recreation  
 That so I should sing ;  
 Because I was Laureate  
 To them and the King.

From its sources which well  
 In the tarn on the fell ;  
 From its fountains  
 In the mountains,  
 Its rills and its gills ;  
 Through moss and through brake,  
 It runs and it creeps  
 For awhile, till it sleeps  
 In its own little Lake.  
 And thence at departing,  
 Awakening and starting,  
 It runs through the reeds  
 And away it proceeds,  
 Through meadow and glade,  
 In sun and in shade,  
 And through the wood-shelter,  
 Among crags in its flurry,  
 Helter-skelter,  
 Hurry-skurry.  
 Here it comes sparkling,  
 And there it lies darkling ;  
 Now smoking and frothing  
 Its tumult and wrath in,  
 Till in this rapid race  
 On which it is bent,  
 It reaches the place  
 Of its steep descent.  
 The Cataract strong  
 Then plunges along,  
 Striking and raging  
 As if a war waging  
 Its caverns and rocks among :



Rising and leaping,  
 Sinking and creeping,  
 Swelling and sweeping,  
 Showering and springing,  
 Flying and flinging,  
 Writhing and ringing,  
 Eddying and whisking  
 Spouting and frisking,  
 Turning and twisting,  
 Around and around  
 With endless rebound !  
 Smiting and fighting,  
 A sight to delight in ;  
 Confounding, astounding,  
 Dizzying and deafening the ear with its sound.

Collecting, projecting,  
 Receding and speeding,  
 And shocking and rocking,  
 And darting and parting,  
 And threading and spreading  
 And whizzing and hissing,  
 And dripping and skipping,  
 And hitting and splitting,  
 And shining and twining,  
 And rattling and battling,  
 And shaking and quaking,  
 And pouring and roaring,  
 And waving and raving,  
 And tossing and crossing,  
 And flowing and going,  
 And running and stunning,  
 And foaming and roaming,  
 And dinning and spinning,  
 And dropping and hopping,  
 And working and jerking,  
 And guggling and struggling,  
 And heaving and cleaving,  
 And moaning and groaning ;  
 And glittering and frittering,  
 And gathering and feathering,  
 And whitening and brightening,  
 And quivering and shivering,  
 And hurrying and skurrying,  
 And thundering and floundering

Dividing and gliding and sliding,  
 And falling and brawling and sprawling,  
 And driving and riving and striving,  
 And sprinkling and twinkling and wrinkling,  
 And sounding and bounding and rounding,  
 And bubbling and troubling and doubling,  
 And grumbling and rumbling and tumbling,  
 And clattering and battering and shattering ;

Retreating and beating and meeting and sheeting,  
 Delaying and straying and playing and spraying,  
 Advancing and prancing and glancing and dancing,  
 Recoiling, turmoiling, and toiling and boiling,  
 And gleaming and streaming and steaming and beaming,  
 And rushing and flushing and brushing and gushing,



And flapping and rapping and clapping and slapping,  
 And curling and whirling and purling and twirling,  
 And thumping and plumping and bumping and jumping,  
 And dashing and flashing and splashing and clashing ;  
 And so never ending, but always descending,  
 Sounds and motions for ever and ever are blending,  
 All at once and all o'er, with a mighty uproar,  
 And this way the Water comes down at Lodore.

### THE KING OF THE CROCODILES

The people at Isna, in Upper Egypt, have a superstition concerning crocodiles similar to that entertained in the West Indies ; they say there is a king of them, who resides near Isna, and who has ears, but no tail ; and he possesses an uncommon regal quality—that of doing no harm. Some are bold enough to assert that they have seen him.

' Now, woman, why without your veil ?  
 And wherefore do you look so pale ?  
 And, woman, why do you groan so sad,  
 And beat your breast, as you were mad ?'

' Oh ! I have lost my darling boy,  
 In whom my soul had all its joy ;  
 And I for sorrow have torn my veil,  
 And sorrow hath made my very heart pale.

' Oh ! I have lost my darling child,  
 And that's the loss that makes me wild ;  
 He stoop'd to the river down to drink,  
 And there was a crocodile by the brink.

' He did not venture in to swim,  
 He only stoop'd to drink at the brim ;  
 But under the reeds the crocodile lay,  
 And struck with his tail and swept him away.

' Now take me in your boat, I pray,  
 For down the river lies my way ;  
 And me to the reed-island bring,  
 For I will go to the crocodile king.

' The king of the crocodiles never does wrong—  
 He has no tail so stiff and strong,  
 He has no tail to strike and slay,  
 But he has ears to hear what I say.

' And to the king I will complain  
 How my poor child was wickedly slain ;  
 The king of the crocodiles he is good,  
 And I shall have the murderer's blood.'

The man replied, ' No, woman, no,  
 To the island of reeds I will not go ;  
 I would not, for any worldly thing,  
 See the face of the crocodile king.'

' Then lend me now your little boat,  
 And I will down the river float,  
 I tell thee that no worldly thing  
 Can keep me from the crocodile king.'



The woman she leapt into the boat,  
And down the river alone did she float,  
And fast with the stream the boat proceeds,  
And now she has come to the island of reeds.

The king of the crocodiles there was seen,  
He sat upon the eggs of his queen,  
And all around, a numerous rout,  
The young prince crocodiles crawl'd about.

The woman shook every limb with fear,  
As she to the crocodile king came near,  
For never man without fear and awe  
The face of his crocodile majesty saw.

She fell upon her bended knee,  
And said, 'O king, have pity on me,  
For I have lost my darling child,  
And that's the loss that makes me wild.

'A crocodile ate him for his food,  
Now let me have the murderer's blood,  
Let me have vengeance for my boy,  
The only thing that can give me joy.

'I know that you, sire ! never do wrong ;  
You have no tail so stiff and strong,  
You have no tail to strike and slay,  
But you have ears to hear what I say.'

'You have done well,' the king replies,  
And fix'd on her his little eyes ;  
'Good woman, yes, you have done right,  
But you have not described me quite.

'I have no tail to strike and slay,  
And I have ears to hear what you say ;  
I have teeth, moreover, as you may see,  
And I will make a meal of thee.'

## WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

1775-1864

LANDOR often said of his own poetry that it was the work of an amateur as compared with his prose, and certain critics have taken him at his word. But even as a poet he must be accorded a foremost place amongst the writers of his own day.

Walter Savage Landor was born on the 30th of January, 1775. He was the son of a gentleman holding a good position amongst the county families of Warwickshire. Walter was educated at Rugby, and in due course proceeded to Trinity College, Oxford. His first idea was to enter the army, but he abandoned that project in favour of the legal profession. Changing his



mind with regard to this also, he left Oxford without taking his degree. His father was good enough to supply him with a regular and liberal allowance, which enabled him to plunge at once into the pursuit of literary fame. He first published a volume of poems in 1795. In *Gebir* he gave to the world 'a noble narrative in stately blank verse,' consisting of 275 lines arranged in seven 'books.' Of this work he says himself: 'When I began to write *Gebir* I had just read Pindar a second time. What I admired was what nobody else had ever noticed—his proud complacency and scornful strength! If I could resemble him in nothing else, I was resolved to be as compendious and exclusive.' This work appeared in 1798. Mr. Forster, in his biography of the poet, tells us that 'the intention of the poem is, by means of Gebir and his brother Tamar, to rebuke the ambition of conquest, however excusable its origin, and to reward the contests of peace, however at first unsuccessful. Gebir is an Iberian Prince, Sovereign of Bœotic Spain, whose conquest of Egypt, undertaken to avenge the wrongs and assert the claims of his ancestors, is suspended through his love for its young Queen Charoba, by the treachery of whose nurse he is nevertheless slain amid the rejoicings of his marriage feast. Tamar is a shepherd youth, the keeper of his brother's herds and flocks, by whom nothing is so much cherished as to 'conquer to his love' one of the sea-nymphs, whom at first he vainly contends with, but who, made subject to mortal control by the superior power of his brother, yields to the passion already inspired in her, and carries Tamar to dwell with her beyond the reach of human ambition.' It begins:

I sing the fates of Gebir. He hath dwelt  
Among those mountain-caverns which retain  
His labours yet, vast halls and flowing wells,  
Nor have forgotten their old master's name  
Though sever'd from his people: here, incens'd  
By meditating on primeval wrongs,  
He blew his battle-horn, at which uprose  
Whole nations; here, ten thousand of most might  
He call'd aloud; and soon Charoba saw  
His dark helm hover o'er the land of Nile.

What should the virgin do? should royal knees  
Bend suppliant? or defenceless hands engage  
Men of gigantic force, gigantic arms?  
For 'twas reported that nor sword sufficed,  
Nor shield immense nor coat of massive mail,  
But that upon their towering heads they bore  
Each a huge stone, refulgent as the stars.



And so till the end it sustains its majestic march, closing with these words :

'And weepest thou, Charoba ! shedding tears  
More precious than the jewels that surround  
The neck of kings entomb'd ! then weep, fair queen,  
At once thy pity and thy pangs assuage.  
Ah ! what is grandeur ? glory ? they are past !  
When nothing else, not life itself, remains,  
Still the fond mourner may be call'd our own.  
Should I complain of Fortune ? how she errs,  
Scattering her bounty upon barren ground,  
Slow to allay the lingering thirst of toil ?  
Fortune, 'tis true, may err, may hesitate,  
Death follows close, nor hesitates, nor errs.  
I feel the stroke ! I die !' He would extend  
His dying arm : it fell upon his breast ;  
Cold sweat and shivering ran o'er every limb,  
His eyes grew stiff, he struggled, and expired.

Landor's father died in 1805, and the poet came into possession of the family estates, but sold them in 1814, and went to Italy where he lived until 1835, when he quarrelled with his wife, and came back to England. For ten years, from 1820, he was engaged in writing his greatest work, which is entitled *Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen*. He was extremely proud of this work, not indeed without reason, but he has been justly accused of arrogance for his expressed opinion of it. 'What I write,' he says, 'is not written on slate, and no finger, not of Time himself, who dips it in the cloud of years, can efface it.' Yet the words hardly state more than the truth. Besides other works in prose, Landor also published poems entitled respectively *Count Julian*, *Heroic Idylls*, and *Hellenics*. He lived for twenty years at Bath, but died at Florence on the 17th of September, 1864. He died 'under a cloud,' for he had been condemned to pay heavy damages for a libel on a lady before he left his native country for the last time. A bust of the poet may be seen in the Collegiate Church of St. Mary, Warwick. *Count Julian* is a powerful tragedy in five acts. His description of the Count is fairly typical of the style of the whole poem :

<p><i>Tarik.</i> He must be happy : for delicious calm Follows the fierce enjoyment of revenge. <i>Hernando.</i> That calm was never his, no other will be. Thou knowest not, and mayst thou never know, How bitter is the tear that fiery shame Scourges and tortures from the soldier's eye. Whichever of these bad reports be true, He hides it from all hearts to wring his own,</p>	<p>At last</p>
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And drags the heavy secret to the grave.  
 Not victory that o'ershadows him sees he ;  
 No airy and light passion stirs abroad  
 To ruffle or to soothe him ; all are quell'd  
 Beneath a mightier, sterner stress of mind ;  
 Wakeful he sits, and lonely, and unmoved,  
 Beyond the arrows, views, or shouts of men ;  
 As oftentimes an eagle, ere the sun  
 Throws o'er the varying earth his early ray,  
 Stands solitary, stands immovable  
 Upon some highest cliff, and rolls his eye,  
 Clear, constant, unobservant, unabased,  
 In the cold light above the dews of morn.  
 He now assumes that quietness of soul  
 Which never but in danger have I seen  
 On his staid breast.

## FROM THE 'HELLENICS'

We mind not how the sun in the mid-sky  
 Is hastening on ; but when the golden orb  
 Strikes the extreme of earth, and when the gulphs  
 Of air and ocean open to receive him,  
 Dampness and gloom invade us ; then we think  
 Ah ! thus it is with Youth. Too fast his feet  
 Run on for sight ; bright eyes bestar his couch  
 The cheerful horn awakens him ; the feast,  
 The revel, the entangling dance, allure,  
 And voices mellower than the Muse's own  
 Heave up his buoyant bosom on their wave.  
 A little while, and then—Ah, Youth ! Youth ! Youth !  
 Listen not to my words—but stay with me !  
 When thou art gone, Life may go too ; the sigh  
 That rises is for thee, and not for Life.

## LORD BYRON

1788-1824

BYRON, according to the brief mention which Dr. Craik affords him in his able history of English literature and language, was the writer whose blaze of popularity it mainly was that threw Scott's name into the shade, and induced him to abandon verse. To say even so much is to stamp the man of whom the words are spoken as something of the nature of a transcendent genius. And yet there will be found but few, if any, critics who will dispute the attendant statement that there is nothing in Byron's earlier poems at least which is comparable to the great passages in those of Scott—to the Battle of Marmion, for instance, or



the raising of the clansmen by the fiery cross in the *Lady of the Lake*, or many others that might be mentioned.

The star of George Gordon Noel Byron rose with a peculiar and startling suddenness. In *Don Juan* he refers to himself as 'the grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme,' and the likeness between the splendour and quickness of his rise and that of the first Napoleon has before now been dwelt upon by his biographers. 'They were both,' says Mr. Shaw, 'in their respective departments, the offspring of revolution, and both, after reigning with absolute power for some time, were deposed from their supremacy, though the reign of each will leave profound traces in the history of the nineteenth century.' And even of the history of the twentieth century the words will doubtless prove to be true.

Byron was born in London in January, 1788. His father is described as an unprincipled profligate, who ran through his wife's private fortune, and died, leaving her and his only child in a condition bordering upon absolute want. The widow, who was a lady of illustrious lineage, and a Scottish heiress, took her orphaned boy to a home of humble dimensions in Aberdeen, and was for some years in possession of very few of the most ordinary comforts of life. Mrs. Byron's temper was a very violent one, and this fact, combined with the straitened circumstances in which he was brought up in those early days, rendered the lot of the future poet far from happy, and there is no doubt that it was not without its lasting effect upon his own temperament. He seems to have inherited from his mother a somewhat morbid susceptibility, which the constant jarring occasioned by her quickly varying moods tended rather to increase than to lessen. When he was about ten years old the death of his grand-uncle occurred, by which event George Byron became the possessor of a peerage, the baronial residence known as Newstead Abbey, near Nottingham, and a considerable estate, though not without certain awkward encumbrances which reduced the value of the rental. In addition to this good fortune, Byron had already been endowed by Nature with a very handsome presence, which was somewhat marred, however, by a disfigurement in the shape of a deformed foot. This flaw in an otherwise faultless exterior was a constant source of trouble to him. Under the altered circumstances his mother was enabled



to send him to Harrow, and in 1805, at the age of seventeen, he proceeded to Trinity College, Cambridge. 'Already the youth of seventeen,' says Dr. Collier, 'thoroughly spoiled by his foolish mother, who flung things at him one moment, and strained him to her breast the next, had been neglecting his regular studies, but eagerly devouring other books of every class and kind. Oriental history seems early to have fascinated his taste, and this early love gave its own colouring to his chief poetical works. Already, too, another love than that for books had been tinging his spirit with its hues. The lame but handsome boy was only fifteen when he met that Mary Chaworth whose coldness towards him was the first rill of lasting bitterness that mingled with the current of his life. The beautiful *Dream*, which we find amongst his minor poems, tells the sad story of this boyish love and its results.' The second verse runs thus :

I saw two beings in the hues of youth  
 Standing upon a hill, a gentle hill,  
 Green and of mild declivity, the last  
 As 'twere the cape of a long ridge of such.

\* \* \* \* \*

These two, a maiden and a youth, were there  
 Gazing—the one on all that was beneath  
 Fair as herself—but the boy gazed on her ;  
 And both were young, and one was beautiful :  
 And both were young, yet not alike in youth.  
 As the sweet moon on the horizon's verge,  
 The maid was on the eve of womanhood ;  
 The boy had fewer summers, but his heart  
 Had far outgrown his years, and to his eye  
 There was but one beloved face on earth,  
 And that was shining on him. . . .  
 But she in these fond feelings had no share :  
 Her sighs were not for him : to her he was  
 Even as a brother—but no more ; 'twas much,  
 For brotherless she was, save in the name  
 Her infant friendship had bestowed on him ;  
 Herself the solitary scion left  
 Of a time-honoured race.—It was a name  
 Which pleased him, and yet pleased him not—and why ?  
 Time taught him a deep answer—when she loved  
 Another ; even *now* she loved another,  
 And on the summit of that hill she stood  
 Looking afar if yet her lover's steed  
 Kept pace with her expectancy, and flew.

'Our union,' said Lord Byron in 1821, 'would have healed feuds in which blood had been shed by our fathers—it would have joined lands, broad and rich—it would have joined at least *one* heart and two persons not ill-matched in years (she is two years my elder)—and—and—and—what has been the result ?'



We pass on to the seventh verse of this melancholy poem. This is the wail of it :

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.  
The Lady of his love :—Oh ! she was changed  
As by the sickness of the soul ; her mind  
Had wander'd from its dwelling, and her eyes,  
They had not their own lustre but the look  
Which is not of the earth ; she was become  
The queen of a fantastic realm ; her thoughts  
Were combinations of disjointed things ;  
And forms impalpable and unperceived  
Of others' sight familiar were to her.  
And this the world calls frenzy ; but the wise  
Have a far deeper madness, and the glance  
Of melancholy is a fearful gift ;  
What is it but the telescope of truth ?  
Which strips the distance of its fantasies,  
And brings life near in utter nakedness,  
Making the cold reality too real !

And then, the pathos of its last five lines !

My dream was past ; it had no further change.  
It was of a strange order, that the doom  
Of these two creatures should be thus traced out  
Almost like a reality—the one  
To end in madness—both in misery.

Jeffrey says of this poem that it is ' written with great beauty and genius, but is extremely painful. We cannot maintain our accustomed tone of levity, or even speak like calm literary judges in the midst of these agonizing traces of a wounded and distempered spirit. Even our admiration is swallowed up in a most painful feeling of pity and wonder. It is impossible to mistake these for fictitious sorrows conjured up for the purpose of poetical effect. There is a dreadful tone of sincerity, and an energy that cannot be counterfeited, in the expression of wretchedness and alienation from human-kind which occurs in every line of this poem.'

In speaking of this tender passage in the life of this great poet, Mr. Moore says : ' The young lady herself combined with the many worldly advantages which encircled her much personal beauty and a disposition the most amiable and attaching. Though already fully alive to her charms, it was at this period (1804) that the young poet seems to have drunk deepest of that fascination whose effects were to be so lasting, six short weeks which he passed in her company being sufficient to lay the foundation of a feeling for all life. With the summer holidays ended



this dream of his youth. He saw Miss Chaworth once more in the succeeding year, and took his last farewell of her on that hill near Annesley which in *The Dream* he so happily describes as "crowned with a peculiar diadem." In August, 1805, she was married to John Musters, Esquire, and died at Wiverton Hall in February, 1832, in consequence, it is believed, of the alarm and danger to which she had been exposed during the sack of Colwick Hall by a party of rioters from Nottingham. The unfortunate lady had been in a feeble state of health for several years, and she and her daughter were obliged to take shelter from the violence of the mob in a shrubbery, to which she was carried by her son William, and where, partly from cold, partly from terror, her constitution sustained a shock which it wanted vigour to resist.

It was in 1805 that Byron penned the well-known *Fragment*, written shortly after the marriage of Miss Chaworth, which runs as follows :

Hills of Annesley ! bleak and barren,  
Where my thoughtless childhood stray'd,  
How the northern tempests, warring,  
Howl above thy tufted shade !

Now no more, the hours beguiling,  
Former favourite haunts I see ;  
Now no more my Mary smiling  
Makes ye seem a heaven to me.

Lord Byron remained at Trinity College for two years. During that period he made the friendship of a number of young men of uncommon talent but sceptical tendencies. His buoyant spirits and love of mischief, which gradually developed into a settled recklessness and systematic defiance of the college authorities, brought him into disfavour with his superiors. He kept some ferocious bulldogs in his rooms, and a tame bear, which it was his delight to introduce to visitors as 'in training for a fellowship.' But of his four-footed pets his chief favourite was a large Newfoundland dog, who was his constant companion when indulging in his passion for boating. The epitaph which may still be read on the monument of this dog at Newstead Abbey affords a striking illustration of the misanthropic views of the poet, who wrote it. The poem runs as follows :

When some proud son of man returns to earth,  
Unknown to glory, but upheld by birth,  
The sculptor's art exhausts the pomp of woe,  
And storied urns record who rest below ;



When all is done, upon the tomb is seen,  
 Not what he was, but what he should have been ;  
 But the poor dog, in life the firmest friend,  
 The first to welcome, foremost to defend,  
 Whose honest heart is still his master's own,  
 Who labours, fights, lives, breathes for him alone,  
 Unhonour'd falls, unnoticed all his worth,  
 Denied in heaven the soul he held on earth :  
 While man, vain insect ! hopes to be forgiven,  
 And claims himself a sole exclusive heaven.  
 Oh man ! thou feeble tenant of an hour,  
 Debased by slavery, or corrupt by power,  
 Who knows thee well must quit thee with disgust,  
 Degraded mass of animated dust !  
 Thy love is lust, thy friendship all a cheat,  
 Thy smiles hypocrisy, thy words deceit !  
 By nature vile, ennobled but by name,  
 Each kindred brute might bid thee blush for shame  
 Ye ! who perchance behold this simple urn,  
 Pass on—it honours none you wish to mourn :  
 To mark a friend's remains these stones arise ;  
 I never knew but one—and here he lies.'

During his leisure hours at Cambridge Byron was busy writing verses, which he ventured to publish at Newark, in 1807, under the title *Hours of Idleness, by Lord Byron, a Minor*. Boyish verses these undoubtedly were, but quite up to the average of such attempts. Within a short period after their appearance they were violently attacked and torn to pieces by a writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, who seems to have dipped his pen in venom with a vengeance. It appeared as if the young poet had not a leg to stand on. But he had. He sat down once more, and wrote in venom himself this time, doubtless making that man sorry he had spoken. A torrent of fierce and scathing invective was the result. *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* soon issued from the press, and in it was speedily recognised a poem which plainly indicated the fact that the abused verses, in spite of their boyishness, were 'but the languid recreations of a man in whose hand, when roused to earnest work, the pen became a tremendous and destructive weapon.' It begins :

Still must I hear ?—shall hoarse Fitzgerald bawl  
 His creaking couplets in a tavern hall,  
 And I not sing, lest, haply, Scotch reviews  
 Should dub me scribbler, and denounce my muse ?  
 Prepare for rhyme—I'll publish, right or wrong :  
 Fools are my theme, let satire be my song.

That these lines, and the long tirade of learned abuse which followed them, were written in a fit of genuine rage can hardly



be questioned. Even when the offended poet was writing a postscript to the second edition the fire seems to have been still burning within his breast. 'What a pity it is,' he writes, 'that I shall be beyond the Bosphorus when the next number (of the *Edinburgh Review*) has passed the Tweed! But I yet hope to light my pipe with it in Persia.' One feels that the words of Thomas Carlyle, in his study of Happiness, are helpful in the analysis of Byron's inner feeling on this occasion. 'A gifted Byron,' says the Sage of Chelsea, 'rises in his wrath, and feeling too surely that he for his part is not "happy," declares the same in very violent language as a piece of news that may be interesting. It evidently has surprised him much. One dislikes to see a man and a poet reduced to proclaim on the streets such tidings; but on the whole, as matters go, this is not the most dislikable. Byron speaks the *truth* in this matter. Byron's large audience indicates how true it is felt to be.' And again: 'Your very Byron, in these days, is at least driven mad; flatly refuses fealty to the world. The world with its injustices, its golden brutalities, and dull yellow guineas, is a disgust to such souls—the ray of Heaven that is in them does at least predestine them to be very miserable here. Yes; and all this misery is faculty misdirected, strength that has not yet found it sway. The black whirlwind is mother of the lightning. No *smoke*, in any sense, but can become flame and radiance! Such soul, once graduated in Heaven's stern University, steps out superior to your guinea.' To this graduating in Heaven's stern University we are perhaps mainly indebted for the stepping out of that unquestionable genius which until then had but glimmered in the breast of Byron. He was at once recognised as a star of the first magnitude in the literary world. From that moment he could wield his magic pen fearlessly, as he liked.

Byron spent the next two years touring through Spain and Turkey. The fascinating beauties and historic interest of the scenes through which he passed did not altogether serve to dispel the gloom of disappointed love which had settled down upon his heart. But he found consolation in that quick outburst of poetical genius which gave the world the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Though the poet himself steadily pooh-poohed the idea, yet the reader cannot fail to identify



him with the hero of the poem—a misanthrope ‘who had exhausted in revelry and vice the power of enjoying life.’ It is no exaggeration to say that this instalment of the great poem took the literary world by storm. The young man who had been ‘reviewed’ so mercilessly five years before now became the idol of London society, and was lionized everywhere he went. For three years he lived in London, and even took his seat in the House of Lords, where he made three speeches, but these did not evoke much enthusiasm in the political world.

At the end of this period of intoxicating fame Byron married Miss Milbanke, a lady of good family and great expectations. But the union turned out unhappily. About a year of domestic misery led to a climax in the shape of a separation. Lady Byron was advised by her family and their lawyer to leave her husband, though the public were never made acquainted with the exact reason for this serious step. Even Lord Byron himself asserted that he never knew the cause of it. For his supposed cruelty, however, he was condemned by the press, and hissed in the streets, and, in sheer disgust, he quitted England in 1816, never to look upon her shores again. ‘Restless and miserable years they were that filled up the allotted span of poor Byron’s life. He passed—a lonely wanderer, with many a poisoned arrow rankling in his memory and heart—over the blood-stained ground of Waterloo, amid the snowy summits of the Jura, echoing with frequent thunder, into the beautiful Italian land, to find in the faded palaces of Venice and the mouldering columns of Rome fit emblems of his own ruined life, but, alas! not to read these lessons of the dead past with a softening and repentant soul. At Venice, at Ravenna, at Pisa, and at Rome, he lived a wicked and most irregular life, writing many poems, for which he received many thousand pounds, but descending, as he sank morally, into a fitful and frequently morbid style, too often poisoned with reckless blasphemy and unconcealed licentiousness.’

We will spare the reader further details of the private life of this brilliant but misguided poet. Suffice it to say that in 1823 he decided to throw in his lot with the Greeks, who were then making a fierce struggle for independence. Embarking at Leghorn, he landed in Cephalonia, and went on to Missolonghi. Here he devoted himself with dauntless courage and untiring



energy to the cause which he had adopted. During some months he rendered much practical help to the troubled country, and was eagerly looking forward to leading an attack on Lepanto, when the terrible marsh fever of the place laid its hand upon his already wasted frame, and he died on the 19th of April, 1824, at the early age of thirty-six. Three days afterwards his warlike Suliotes stood mourning round his bier, listening to the funeral service. The body was brought to England, and buried in the family tomb at Hucknall, near Newstead. An application was made for permission to bury his remains in Westminster Abbey, but this honour was refused by the authorities on account of the opinions and manner of life of the poet.

Besides the works already mentioned, Byron published *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos* in 1813, and *The Corsair* and *Lara* in 1814. By 1819 he had added to these *The Siege of Corinth*, *Manfred*, *The Prisoner of Chillon*, and the completing cantos of *Childe Harold*. *Beppo*, which appeared in 1818, was written in a new style, which was more fully developed in *Don Juan*, which appeared in instalments between 1819 and 1823. A number of dramas were also amongst his minor efforts. The circulation of these works was in some cases quite enormous. He himself boasts that of *The Corsair* 14,000 copies were sold in one day. The sums he received for his poems amounted, according to his publisher, Mr. Murray, to £15,000.

The greater poems of Lord Byron are so well known, and so easily obtained, that a few passing comments may suffice with regard to their general character. The plan of *Childe Harold* has been called an anomaly in poetical science, but its effect is acknowledged to be magnificent—a panoramic view of scenes, persons, and events which form the beacon towers on the ocean of time. It is quite evident that the poet threw his whole heart into the construction and embellishing of it, though his dark spirit also overshadows it with its wings.

‘As he grew in power,’ says Mr. Stopford Brooke, ‘he escaped from his morbid self, and ran into the opposite extreme in *Don Juan*. It is chiefly in it that he shows the influence of the revolutionary spirit. It is written in bold revolt against all the conventionality of social morality and religion and politics. It claimed for himself and for others absolute freedom of indi-



vidual act and thought in opposition to that force of society which tends to make all men of one pattern.'

Some of his finest and most poetical passages are to be found in his Tales, and yet, with the exception of *The Prisoner of Chillon* and *Parisina*, they do not rise so often as his greater poems into that charm of imagery, suggested by Nature at her best and loveliest, which shines forth in almost every canto of *Childe Harold*. Though by no means perfect in every detail, *Manfred* is perhaps the poem which gives one the most complete example of his poetical temperament. Of the Tragedies it has been said with truth that, though they are not worthy of the poet, they of all his works do most honour to the man.

Thomas Moore, in his exhaustive biography of the poet, has withdrawn the veil of mystery in which Lord Byron loved to shroud himself, and consequently much of the romantic interest that was associated with his name has disappeared. The series of his letters, and his diary, exhibit anything but a mind tortured amidst the storms of an unhappy idiosyncrasy. His contempt of the world and of mankind culminates in an almost cringing anxiety as to the world's opinions, and an all but avowed longing for popularity. Even his scepticism is lacking in principle, as must always be the case where the sceptic is content to doubt without examining, and to judge without sifting the evidence. One of his many biographers has thus ventured to sum up the circumstances which led to the evolution of Lord Byron's genius : 'An extremely irregular education (despite the almost startling list of books which, according to Mr. Moore, he had read before he was half-way out of his teens); the injudicious moral management of a parent utterly incapable of directing aright even a common mind; a selfishness and obstinacy of purpose existing singularly in a soul theoretically alive to every generous and noble impulse, and who has quoted of himself the words of Ovid :

"Video meliora proboque  
Deteriora sequor."

Add to these circumstances passions and emotions, good and evil, as excitable and capricious in their wayward variation as the ocean waters; an intellect of great power, but of power exhibited remarkably only when electrified by the touch of imagination, and a consequent false philosophy of men and things.'



## FROM 'CHILDE HAROLD'

## CANTO IV

## THE CATARACT OF VELINO

The roar of waters !—from the headlong height  
 Velino cleaves the wave-worn precipice ;  
 The fall of waters ! rapid as the light  
 The flashing mass foams shaking the abyss ;  
 The hell of waters ! where they howl and hiss,  
 And boil in endless torture ; while the sweat  
 Of their great agony, wrung out from this  
 Their Phlegethon, curls round the rocks of jet  
 That gird the gulf around, in pitiless horror set,

And mounts in spray the skies, and thence again  
 Returns in an unceasing shower, which round  
 With its unemptied cloud of gentle rain,  
 Is an eternal April to the ground,  
 Making it all one emerald :—how profound  
 The gulf ! and how the giant element  
 From rock to rock leaps with delirious bound,  
 Crushing the cliffs, which, downward worn and rent  
 With his fierce footsteps, yield in chasms a fearful vent

To the broad column which rolls on, and shows  
 More like the fountain of an infant sea  
 Torn from the womb of mountains by the throes  
 Of a new world, than only thus to be  
 Parent of rivers, which flow gushingly,  
 With many windings through the vale :—Look back  
 Lo ! where it comes like an eternity,  
 As if to sweep down all things in its track,  
 Charming the eye with dread—a matchless cataract,

Horribly beautiful ! but on the verge,  
 From side to side, beneath the glittering morn,  
 An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge,  
 Like Hope upon a death-bed, and, unworn  
 Its steady dyes, while all around is torn  
 By the distracted waters, bears serene  
 Its brilliant hues with all their beams unshorn :  
 Resembling, 'mid the torture of the scene,  
 Love watching Madness with unalterable mien.

## AN EVENING SCENE IN ITALY

The moon is up, and yet it is not night—  
 Sunset divides the sky with her—a sea  
 Of glory streams along the Alpine height  
 Of blue Friuli's mountains ; Heaven is free  
 From clouds, but of all colours seems to be  
 Melted to one vast Iris of the West,  
 Where the Day joins the past Eternity ;  
 While, on the other hand, meek Dian's crest  
 Floats through the azure air—an island of the blest !



A single star is at her side, and reigns  
 With her o'er half the lovely heaven ; but still  
 Yon sunny sea heaves brightly, and remains  
 Roll'd o'er the peak of the far Rhaetian hill,  
 As Day and Night contending were, until  
 Nature reclaim'd her order :—gently flows  
 The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues instil  
 The odorous purple of a new-born rose,  
 Which streams upon her stream, and glass'd within it glows,  
 Fill'd with the face of heaven, which, from afar,  
 Comes down upon the waters ; all its hues,  
 From the rich sunset to the rising star,  
 Their magical variety diffuse :  
 And now they change ; a paler shadow strews  
 Its mantle o'er the mountains ; parting day  
 Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang imbues  
 With a new colour as it gasps away,  
 The last still loveliest, till—'tis gone—and all is gray.

## ADDRESS TO THE OCEAN

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,  
 There is a rapture on the lonely shore,  
 There is society, where none intrudes,  
 By the deep sea, and music in its roar :  
 I love not Man the less, but Nature more,  
 From these our interviews, in which I steal  
 From all I may be, or have been before,  
 To mingle with the Universe, and feel  
 What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.  
 Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll !  
 Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain ;  
 Man marks the earth with ruin—his control  
 Stops with the shore ;—upon the watery plain  
 The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain  
 A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,  
 When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,  
 He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,  
 Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

His steps are not upon thy paths,—thy fields  
 Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise  
 And shake him from thee ; the vile strength he wields  
 For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,  
 Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,  
 And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray  
 And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies  
 His petty hope in some near port or bay,  
 And dashest him again to earth :—there let him lay.

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls  
 Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,  
 And monarchs tremble in their capitals,  
 The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make  
 Their clay creator the vain title take  
 Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war ;  
 These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,  
 They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar  
 Alike the Armada's pride, or spoils of Trafalgar.



Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee—  
 Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they ?  
 Thy waters wasted them while they were free,  
 And many a tyrant since ; their shores obey  
 The stranger, slave, or savage ; their decay  
 Has dried up realms to deserts :—not so thou,  
 Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play—  
 Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow—  
 Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form  
 Glasses itself in tempests ; in all time,  
 Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm,  
 Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime  
 Dark-heaving ;—boundless, endless, and sublime—  
 The image of Eternity—the throne  
 Of the Invisible ; even from out thy slime  
 The monsters of the deep are made ; each zone  
 Obeys thee ; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

And I have loved thee, Ocean ! and my joy  
 Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be  
 Borne, like thy bubbles, onward : from a boy  
 I wanton'd with thy breakers—they to me  
 Were a delight ; and if the freshening sea  
 Made them a terror—'twas a pleasing fear,  
 For I was as it were a child of thee,  
 And trusted to thy billows far and near,  
 And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do here.

#### THE GLADIATOR

I see before me the Gladiator lie :  
 He leans upon his hand—his manly brow  
 Consents to death, but conquers agony,  
 And his droop'd head sinks gradually low—  
 And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow  
 From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,  
 Like the first of a thunder-shower ; and now  
 The arena swims around him—he is gone,  
 Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who won.

He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes  
 Were with his heart, and that was far away :  
 He reck'd not of the life he lost, nor prize,  
 But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,  
 There were his young barbarians all at play,  
 There was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,  
 Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday—  
 All this rush'd with his blood—Shall he expire  
 And unavenged ?—Arise ! ye Goths, and glut your ire !

#### STANZAS TO AUGUSTA<sup>1</sup>

Though the day of my destiny's over,  
 And the star of my fate hath declined,  
 Thy soft heart refused to discover  
 The faults which so many could find ;

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<sup>1</sup> The poet's sister, the Honourable Mrs. Leigh.



Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted,  
 It shrunk not to share it with me,  
 And the love which my spirit hath painted  
 It never hath found but in *thee*.

Then when nature around me is smiling,  
 The last smile which answers to mine,  
 I do not believe it beguiling,  
 Because it reminds me of thine;  
 And when winds are at war with the ocean,  
 As the breasts I believed in with me,  
 If their billows excite an emotion,  
 It is that they bear me from *thee*.

Though the rock of my last hope is shiver'd,  
 And its fragments are sunk in the wave,  
 Though I feel that my soul is deliver'd  
 To pain—it shall not be its slave.  
 There is many a pang to pursue me ;  
 They may crush, but they shall not contemn—  
 They may torture, but shall not subdue me—  
 'Tis of *thee* that I think—not of them.

Though human, thou did'st not deceive me,  
 Though woman, thou did'st not forsake,  
 Though loved, thou forbores to grieve me,  
 Though slander'd, thou never could'st shake,—  
 Though trusted, thou did'st not disclaim me,  
 Though parted, it was not to fly,  
 Though watchful, 'twas not to defame me,  
 Nor, mute, that the world might belie.

Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,  
 Nor the war of the many with one—  
 If my soul was not fitted to prize it,  
 'Twas folly not sooner to shun :  
 And if dearly that error hath cost me,  
 And more than I once could foresee,  
 I have found that, whatever it lost me,  
 It could not deprive me of *thee*.

From the wreck of the past, which hath perish'd,  
 Thus much I at least may recall,  
 It hath taught me that what I most cherish'  
 Deserved to be dearest of all :  
 In the desert a fountain is springing,  
 In the wide waste there still is a tree,  
 And a bird in the solitude singing,  
 Which speaks to my spirit of *thee*.

July 24, 1816.

#### FROM 'HEBREW MELODIES'

##### THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,  
 And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold ;  
 And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,  
 When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,  
 That host with their banners at sunset were seen :  
 Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,  
 That host on the morrow lay wither'd and strown.



For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,  
 And breathed in the face of the foe as he pass'd ;  
 And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,  
 And their hearts but once heav'd and for ever grew still !

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,  
 But through it there roll'd not the breath of his pride ;  
 And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,  
 And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,  
 With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail ;  
 And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,  
 The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,  
 And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal ;  
 And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,  
 Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord !

### PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

1792-1822

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY was a son of Sir Timothy Shelley, Baronet, and was born at Field Place, near Horsham, in Sussex, in the year 1792. He is said to have been, from his childhood, of a distinctly morbid turn of mind. He was educated at Eton, and during his schooldays was a diligent student of romance, which he turned to account by writing two novels before he was out of his teens. A youth of tender feeling, he was greatly disturbed in mind by the system of bullying which was in vogue in his school, and had imbibed a spirit of misanthropy before he left for the University. He matriculated at Oxford, where he spent much of his time in reading works which influenced the student in the direction of scepticism and 'free thought.' To such an extent did he pursue this line of false reasoning, that he became saturated with an aversion to anything which savoured of Christian sentiment. Moreover, he was so conscientious withal that he thought it would be dishonourable to conceal his thoughts, and thus deny his fellow-men the benefit of their helpfulness. So he published a tract which, though anonymous, set forth his convictions fully and clearly. But the college Dons got wind of the matter somehow, and took him to task severely. He prevaricated, or at least refused either to affirm or deny his



connection with the obnoxious thing. As a consequence, he was dismissed from the University.

This opening of a brilliant, though brief, career would have been sufficiently sad in itself without the addition of another misdemeanour. But the second stage was worthy of the first. The poet married beneath him, and after three years of wedded happiness, he basely deserted his wife, and formed an intrigue with the daughter of William Godwin, the novelist. His lawful wife ended her misery by committing suicide. These youthful escapades, to call them by a mild name, caused a very natural estrangement between the poet and his father, who forbade him to darken his doors again. The marriage took place in 1811, and the separation in 1814.

During this period Shelley had been devoting himself to the composition of verses, and to a closer study of philosophy and metaphysics. In 1814 he went for a tour in France, and in 1815 his father seems to have relented somewhat, for on inheriting the family honours, he allowed the young poet an increase of pocket-money. He returned to London for awhile, and went on the Continent again in 1816. In Switzerland he encountered Lord Byron, with whom he struck up a close and interesting friendship. Byron's temperament was not one to be offended by the loose ideas which clouded the brilliance of Shelley's eloquence, and it will perhaps never be known exactly how much one of these two great writers was influenced by the other, so strong was the fascination of each. In September, 1816, Shelley came back to England, lived at Bath for a few months, and settled down at Marlow-on-Thames, until February, 1818. At this time his mind was still further embittered against social stringencies by a decision of the Court of Chancery which deprived him of the guardianship of his children.

'This has been stigmatized by Shelley's admirers,' says Mr. Shaw, 'as an act of odious bigotry; but it should be recollected that his wife's father would naturally refuse to surrender his grandchildren to a man who had been guilty of a great and cruel wrong against his family, and who proclaimed the intention of educating the children in irreligious opinions.'

Shelley's health beginning to give way in 1818, he went again to the Continent, where he once more encountered Byron. This time he travelled through the enchantments of Italian scenery,



pouring forth in uninterrupted profusion as he went the brilliant poems which have made his name and talent famous for all time, His end came with tragic and pathetic suddenness. While yachting with a friend and one boatman in the Gulf of Spezzia on the 8th of July, 1822, the little vessel was struck by a squall and foundered with 'all hands.' A few days afterwards the sea gave up her dead, and the youthful poet was cremated by his two friends, Byron and Leigh Hunt. His remains were subsequently taken to Rome, and interred in the beautiful Protestant cemetery near the grave of Caius Cestius. His heart, which was deposited with his ashes, is said to have remained unconsumed.

'Notwithstanding the lawlessness and even licentiousness of his political, religious, and social systems, few have lived more morally pure than this unfortunate poet. He was, moreover, gentle, affectionate, and remarkable for his liberal beneficence to distress in every shape. But as God has appointed that we cannot transgress a physical or a moral law without drawing down its social punishment, even in this world, and, it may be, transmitting it to our descendants, so it would seem as if this ordinance extended to intellectual laws; the formation and the promulgation of a false and detestable philosophy, however pure and even honourable were the poet's motives, proved the curse of Shelley's life. It is sad to reflect that a spirit gifted with all the most beautiful susceptibilities of humanity, "interpenetrated" (to use one of his many coinages) with the multitudinous beauty and harmony of nature—strong, intellectually, to grasp the universe—pure, as unaided man is pure in motive—and clear, in the same sense, from active vice—was yet not protected from the glittering seductions of vanity and presumption, but proudly confident, walked, like a beautiful demon, in mystic paths, "where angels fear to tread." In spite of the intensity of its beauty and feeling, in spite of its far-reaching sublimity of intellectual grandeur, of its gorgeous pomp of many-coloured learning, we shrink from the poetry of Shelley like something that our "nature's chilled at." Yet who can restrain admiration of the exhaustless wealth of his mind? His images stream like the opal-hued abundance of a sunny waterfall, breaking in music on each other to catch the eye in renovated forms, while it can scarce mark the point whence one sprang from the other. The music of his verse is subtle, intricate, and varied, "in linked



sweetness long drawn out," like the strain heard by the "Ancient Mariner":

' Now it is like all instruments,  
Now like a lonely lute.'

*Queen Mab* was the first of Shelley's poems to attract public attention. His fame was not firmly established, however, until the appearance of *Alastor; or, The Spirit of Solitude*, a really great poem whose aim is to portray the feelings and sentiments of a being of high aspirations and noble purposes who is nevertheless misunderstood by his fellow-creatures, and takes refuge in retirement from the baseness of the world. It is written in blank verse, and was issued in 1816.

*The Revolt of Islam* followed in 1817. The poet himself says of it: 'I have chosen a story of human passion in its most universal character, diversified with moving and romantic adventures, and appealing, in contempt of all artificial opinions or institutions, to the common sympathies of every human breast. I have made no attempt to recommend the motives which I would substitute for those at present governing mankind by methodical and systematic argument. I would only awaken the feelings so that the reader would see the beauty of true virtue, and be incited to those inquiries which have led to my moral and political creed, and that of some of the sublimest intellects of the world.'

He claims for the poem that it is therefore narrative, and not didactic. In the preface from which the above words are taken the poet very strongly avows his contempt for critics and their criticisms. 'I have sought to write, as I believe that Homer, Shakespeare, and Milton wrote, in utter disregard of anonymous censure. I am certain that calumny and misrepresentation, though it may move me to compassion, cannot disturb my peace. I shall understand the expressive silence of those sagacious enemies who dare not trust themselves to speak. . . . If certain critics were as clear-sighted as they are malignant, how great would be the benefit to be derived from their virulent writings! As it is, I fear I shall be malicious enough to be amused with their paltry tricks and lame invectives.'

And so on. Such a tirade furnishes the reader with its own comment on the spirit in which it was written. And what of the poem itself? It is a work of unquestionable genius, but



very questionable usefulness, if indeed there can be any question as to the inutility of holding up to superb ridicule such institutions as marriage, monarchy, and even religion itself.

*Prometheus Unbound* was written in 1819. The author claims for it the distinction of being imbued with imagery which is drawn from the operations of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed. This, he says, is unusual in modern poetry, although Dante and Shakespeare are full of instances of the same kind—Dante, indeed, more than any other poet, and with greater success. The poem was ‘chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever-widening labyrinths upon the immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening of spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama.’ It is one of his greatest works, and gives full evidence of that strangely anomalous feeling of emotions which hold perpetual conflict with one another in the breast of this strange poet, chief amongst which are a profound antagonism to the laws of society and a magnanimous love for his fellow-men.

Of the very numerous works of Shelley, we may also notice *Hellas*, a liberal-minded lyrical drama dealing with the struggle of the Greeks for independence. ‘We are all Greeks,’ he says, as he exclaims at the apathy of the rulers of the civilized world to the descendants of that nation to which they owe their civilization. ‘Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts, have their root in Greece. But for Greece we might still have been savages and idolaters, or, what is worse, might have arrived at such a stagnant and miserable state of social institutions as China and Japan possess.

I hear ! I hear  
The hiss as of a rushing wind,  
The roar as of an ocean foaming,  
The thunder as of earthquake coming.  
I hear ! I hear !  
The crash as of an empire falling,  
The shrieks as of a people calling  
Mercy ! mercy !—How they thrill !  
Then a shout of ‘ Kill ! kill ! kill ! ’



And thus, at the end :

O cease ! must hate and death return ?  
 Cease ! must men kill and die ?  
 Cease ! drain not to its dregs the urn  
 Of bitter prophecy.  
 The world is weary of the past,  
 O might it die or rest at last !

*The Cenci* is another drama, written in 1819, the same year as *Prometheus*. It is in five acts. It deals with the Italian story of Beatrice di Cenci, 'a subject not to be mentioned in Italian society without awakening a deep and breathless interest.' The lady was the daughter of an atrociously wicked count :

That wretched Beatrice  
 Men speak of, whom her father sometimes hales  
 From hall to hall by the entangled hair.

She hires murderers to put him to death, and is executed at Rome for her crime. The tragedy is strongly suggestive of *Macbeth* in parts, and the manner would not be unworthy of Shakespeare.

In *Rosalind and Helen* the poet inveighs against the stringent laws which have constituted the bonds of wedlock more relentless than he could wish. In *Adonais* he mourns for Keats, whose early death brought a brilliant career to an untimely end, to the inestimable loss of the literary world. Of his lesser poems, none is more fully charged with poetic charm and natural sweetness than his *Ode to a Skylark*, which will be known as a perfect thing wherever, and as long as, the lingual music of poetry may gladden heart and ear.

In the Preface to *Prometheus Unbound* the author indulges in observations on poetry which in a measure help the student of his works to read this poet's methods and motives with a clearer intelligence. He seems to fear the possible taunt of imitation or plagiarism, which in his case he would excuse rather than repudiate.

'As to imitation,' he says, 'poetry is a mimetic art. It creates, but it creates by combination and representation. Poetical abstractions are beautiful and new, not because the portions of which they are composed had no previous existence in the mind of man, or in nature, but because the whole produced by their combination has some intelligible and beautiful analogy with those sources of emotion and thought, and with the con-



temporary condition of them. One great poet is a masterpiece of nature, while another not only ought to study, but must study. . . . A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others ; and of such external influences as excite and sustain those powers ; he is not one, but both. . . . Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors, and musicians, are, in one sense, the creators, and in another the creations, of their age. From this subjection the loftiest do not escape. There is a similarity between Homer and Hesiod, between Æschylus and Euripides, between Virgil and Horace, between Dante and Petrarch, between Shakespeare and Fletcher, between Dryden and Pope. Each has a generic resemblance under which their specific distinctions are arranged. If this similarity be the result of imitation, I am willing to confess that I have imitated.'

## TO WORDSWORTH

Poet of Nature, thou hast wept to know  
 That things depart which never may return ;  
 Childhood and youth, friendship, and love's first glow,  
 Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.  
 These common woes I feel. One loss is mine,  
 Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone deplore  
 Thou wert as a lone star whose light did shine  
 On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar ;  
 Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood  
 Above the blind and battling multitude ;  
 In honoured poverty thy voice did weave  
 Songs consecrate to truth and liberty.  
 Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,  
 Thus, having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

## TO A SKYLARK

Hail to thee, blithe spirit !  
 Bird thou never wert,  
 That from heaven, or near it,  
 Pourest thy full heart  
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.  
  
 Higher still and higher  
 From the earth thou springest  
 Like a cloud of fire ;  
 The blue deep thou wingest,  
 And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.  
  
 In the golden lightning  
 Of the sunken sun,  
 O'er which clouds are brightening,  
 Thou dost float and run ;  
 Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.



The pale purple even  
 Melts around thy flight ;  
 Like a star of heaven,  
 In the broad daylight  
 Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows  
 Of that silver sphere,  
 Whose intense lamp narrows  
 In the white dawn clear,  
 Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air  
 With thy voice is loud,  
 As, when night is bare,  
 From one lonely cloud  
 The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not ;  
 What is most like thee ?  
 From rainbow clouds there flow not  
 Drops so bright to see,  
 As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden  
 In the light of thought,  
 Singing hymns unbidden,  
 Till the world is wrought  
 To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not :

Like a high-born maiden  
 In a palace tower,  
 Soothing her love-laden  
 Soul in secret hour  
 With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower :

Like a glow-worm golden  
 In a dell of dew,  
 Scattering unbeholden  
 Its aerial hue  
 Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view :

Like a rose embowered  
 In its own green leaves,  
 By warm winds deflowered,  
 Till the scent it gives  
 Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged thieves :

Sound of vernal showers  
 On the twinkling grass,  
 Rain-awakened flowers,  
 All that ever was  
 Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,  
 What sweet thoughts are thine :  
 I have never heard,  
 Praise of love or wine,  
 That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.



Chorus hymeneal,  
 Or triumphal chant,  
 Matched with thine would be all  
 But an empty vaunt,  
 A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains  
 Of thy happy strain ?  
 What fields, or waves, or mountains ?  
 What shapes of sky or plain ?  
 What love of thine own kind ? What ignorance of pain ?

With thy clear keen joyance  
 Languor cannot be :  
 Shadow of annoyance  
 Never came near thee :  
 Thou lovest ; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,  
 Thou of death must deem  
 Things more true and deep  
 Than we mortals dream,  
 Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream ?

We look before and after  
 And pine for what is not ;  
 Our sincerest laughter  
 With some pain is fraught ;  
 Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn  
 Hate, and pride, and fear ;  
 If we were things born  
 Not to shed a tear,  
 I know not how thy joy we ever could come near.

Better than all measures  
 Of delight and sound,  
 Better than all treasures  
 That in books are found  
 Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground !

Teach me half the gladness  
 That my brain must know,  
 Such harmonious madness  
 From my lips would flow,  
 The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

#### THE CLOUD

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,  
 From the seas and the streams ;  
 I bear light shade for the leaves when laid  
 In their noonday dreams.  
 From my wings are shaken the dews that waken  
 The sweet birds every one,  
 When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,  
 As she dances about the sun.



I wield the flail of the lashing hail,  
 And whiten the green plains under ;  
 And then again I dissolve it in rain,  
 And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,  
 And their great pines groan aghast ;  
 And all the night 'tis my pillow white,  
 While I sleep in the arms of the blast.  
 Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers,  
 Lightning, my pilot, sits ;  
 In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,  
 It struggles and howls at fits ;  
 Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,  
 This pilot is guiding me,  
 Lured by the love of the genii that move  
 In the depths of the purple sea ;  
 Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,  
 Over the lakes and the plains,  
 Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,  
 The Spirit he loves remains ;  
 And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,  
 While he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,  
 And his burning plumes outspread,  
 Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,  
 When the morning star shines dead.  
 As on the jag of a mountain crag,  
 Which an earthquake rocks and swings,  
 An eagle alit one moment may sit  
 In the light of its golden wings ;  
 And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,  
 Its ardours of rest and of love,  
 And the crimson pall of eve may fall  
 From the depth of heaven above,  
 With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,  
 As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,  
 Whom mortals call the Moon,  
 Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,  
 By the midnight breezes strewn ;  
 And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,  
 Which only the angels hear,  
 May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,  
 The stars peep behind her and peer ;  
 And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,  
 Like a swarm of golden bees,  
 When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,  
 Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,  
 Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,  
 Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with the burning zone,  
 And the moon's with a girdle of pearl ;  
 The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,  
 When the whirlwinds my bnnaer unfurl.



## A HISTORY OF BRITISH POETRY

From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,  
 Over a torrent sea,  
 Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,  
 The mountains its columns be.  
 The triumphal arch through which I march  
 With hurricane, fire, and snow,  
 When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,  
 Is the million-coloured bow :  
 The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,  
 While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,  
 And the nursling of the sky ;  
 I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores ;  
 I change, but I cannot die.  
 For after the rain, when, with never a stain,  
 The pavilion of heaven is bare,  
 And the winds and sunbeams, with their convex gleams,  
 Build up the blue dome of air,  
 I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,  
 And out of the caverns of rain,  
 Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,  
 I arise and unbuild it again.

A SUMMER-EVENING CHURCHYARD, LECHDALE,  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

The wind has swept from the wide atmosphere  
 Each vapour that obscured the sunset's ray ;  
 And pallid evening twines its beaming hair  
 In duskier braids around the languid eyes of day ;  
 Silence and twilight, unbeloved of men,  
 Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.

They breathe their spells towards the departing day,  
 Encompassing the earth, air, stars, and sea ;  
 Light, sound, and motion own the potent sway,  
 Responding to the charm with its own mystery.  
 The winds are still, or the dry church-tower grass  
 Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

Thou too, ærial Pile ! whose pinnacles,  
 Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire,  
 Obey'st in silence their sweet solemn spells,  
 Clothing in hues of heaven thy dim and distant spire,  
 Around whose lessening and invisible height  
 Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres ;  
 And, mouldering as they sleep, a thrilling sound,  
 Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs,  
 Breathed from their worthy beds all living things around,  
 And mingling with the still night and mute sky  
 Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

Thus solemnized and softened, death is mild  
 And terrorless as this serenest night :  
 Here could I hope, like some inquiring child  
 Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human sight  
 Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep  
 That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep.



## JOHN KEATS

1795-1821

KEATS has been called the Poet of Beauty. W. M. Rossetti says of him : ' The poet of youthfulness, he was privileged to become and to remain enduringly the poet of rapt expectation and passionate delight.'

This great poet was born in Moorfields, London, in 1795, and was bound as apprentice to a surgeon when he was only fifteen years of age. He had a constitutional tendency to consumption, and his physical strength is said to have been still further undermined by constant attention to an invalid brother. He died in Rome on the 23rd of February, 1821, at the early age of twenty-five. During his apprenticeship he spent the greater part of his leisure in writing poetry, and his first volume was issued in 1817. In the following year he published *Endymion*, which is the longest of his poems. This work was savagely attacked by the *Quarterly Review*, and the poet felt the severity of the criticism very keenly, though there can be but little doubt that some historians have gone too far in attributing his death to the attack. The poem has much that is beautiful to commend it, but it is by no means the poet's masterpiece. Shelley gives it but faint praise. He says : ' I have read Keats' poem. Much praise is due to me for having read it, the author's intention appearing to be that no person should possibly get to the end of it. Yet it is full of some of the highest and finest gleams of poetry. I think if he had printed about fifty pages of fragments from it I should have been tempted to admire Keats as a poet more than I ought, of which there is now no danger.' In his preface to the poem Keats says : ' I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece and dulled its brightness ; for I wish to try once more, before I bid it farewell.'

In 1820 Keats published a volume which contained *The Eve of St. Agnes*, *Isabella*, *Lamia*, *Hyperion*, and several beautiful odes.

*The Eve of St. Agnes* was written in 1819. It is based upon a pretty and quaint superstition to the effect that on the eve of St. Agnes's Day, January 21, maidens who go supperless to bed,



if they undress without looking backwards or aside, and pray for a sight of their lovers, will be permitted to see them in their dreams, and receive their homage and adoration. The poem is sweetness itself. Romance, imagination, beauty, all the virtues of poesy throb in every line, while the cadences and 'harmonious movements' are faultless. It is written in the Spenserian stanza.

*Isabella*, a poem in the eight-line stanza, is a love-story, the original of which is to be found in the *Decameron* of Boccaccio, where it is placed in the mouth of Philomena. Keats has given it a Northern setting by changing the scene from Messina to Florence. It was written when the poet was twenty-three, and is said to be an improvement on the original.

*Lamia*, which is one of the poet's best compositions, is based upon the theory that it is possible for a man to love a dream-maiden, and is written in the heroic couplet. It 'tells the story of the serpent-lady, who loves a youth of Corinth, and who cherishes him in the enchanted palace which she has built for him, until the cold scrutiny of the philosopher compels her to resume her serpent form.'

Of all the poems of Keats, perhaps the most popular, and certainly the best known, is his exquisite *Ode to a Nightingale*. It is one of the finest things in the whole range of English poetry. Mr. Palgrave says: 'It is one of the six or eight amongst his poems so unique and perfect in style that it is hard to see how any experience could have made them better.'

Lord Byron was evidently one of those who attributed the death of Keats to the severity of the criticism to which his work was subjected, for in July, 1821, he wrote the following little epitaph in memory of the deceased poet:

'Who killed John Keats?'  
'I,' says the *Quarterly*,  
So savage and tartarly;  
'Twas one of my feats.'

'Who shot the arrow?'  
'The poet-priest Milman  
(So ready to kill man);  
Or Southey, or Barrow.'

In prose he refers to Keats as 'a young person learning to write poetry, and beginning by teaching the art.' But after the



young person's death the greater poet seems to have softened a little. He writes :

'Mr. Keats died at Rome . . . of a decline produced by his having burst a blood-vessel on reading the article on his *Endymion* in the *Quarterly Review*. I have read the article before and since, and although it is bitter, I do not think that a man should permit himself to be killed by it. But a young man little dreams what he must inevitably encounter in the course of a life ambitious of public notice. My indignation at Mr. Keats' denunciation of Pope has hardly permitted me to do justice to his own genius, which, *malgré* all the fantastic fopperies of his style, was undoubtedly of great promise. His fragment of *Hyperion* seems actually inspired by the Titans, and is as sublime as Æschylus. He is a loss to our literature, and the more so as he himself, before his death, was said to have been persuaded that he had not taken the right line, and was reforming his style on the more classical models of the language.'

It is amusing, as it is pathetic, to find the author of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* moralizing thus on the folly of being hurt by criticism. But there will be few, if any, who will not agree with him in saying that the early death of Keats involved a grievous loss to the poetical literature of the world.

#### FROM 'HYPERION'

##### SATURN AND THEA

Deep in the shady sadness of a vale  
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,  
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,  
Sat gray-haired Saturn, quiet as a stone,  
Still as the silence round about his lair ;  
Forest on forest hung about his head  
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,  
Not so much life as on a summer's day  
Robs not one light seed from the feathered grass,  
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.  
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more  
By reason of his fallen divinity  
Spreading a shade : the Naiad 'mid her reeds  
Pressed her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin sand large footmarks went  
No further than to where his feet had strayed,  
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground  
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,  
Unscathed ; and his realmless eyes were closed ;



While his bowed head seemed listening to the earth  
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seemed no force could wake him from his place ;  
But there came one, who with a kindred hand  
Touched his wide shoulders, after bending low  
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.  
She was a goddess of the infant world ;  
By her in stature the tall Amazon  
Had stood a pigmy's height : she would have ta'en  
Achilles by the hair, and bent his neck ;  
Or with a finger stayed Ixion's wheel.  
Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,  
Pedestalled haply in a palace court,  
When sages looked to Egypt for their lore.  
But oh ! how unlike marble was that face !  
How beautiful, if sorrow had not made  
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self !  
There was a listening fear in her regard,  
As if calamity had but begun ;  
As if the vanward clouds of evil days  
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear  
Was, with its stored thunder, labouring up.  
One hand she pressed upon that aching spot  
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,  
Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain ;  
The other upon Saturn's bended neck  
She laid, and to the level of his ear  
Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake  
In solemn tenor and deep organ tone ;  
Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue  
Would come in these like accents—oh ! how frail,  
To that large utterance of the early gods !—  
' Saturn, look up ! though wherefore, poor old king ?  
I cannot say, " O wherefore sleepest thou ?"  
For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth  
Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a god ;  
And ocean, too, with all its solemn noise,  
Has from thy sceptre passed, and all the air  
Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.  
Thy thunder, conscious of the new command,  
Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house ;  
And thy sharp lightning in unpractised hands  
Scorches and burns our once serene domain.  
O aching time ! O moments big as years !  
All, as ye pass, swell out the monstrous truth,  
And press it so upon our weary griefs  
That unbelief has not a space to breathe.  
Saturn, sleep on ! Oh, thoughtless, why did I  
Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude ?  
Why should I ope my melancholy eyes ?  
Saturn, sleep on ! while at thy feet I weep.'

As when, upon a tranced summer night,  
Those green-robed senators of mighty woods,  
Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,  
Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,  
Save from one gradual solitary gust  
Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,  
As if the ebbing air had but one wave ;  
So came these words and went.



## ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

Much have I travelled in the realms of gold,  
 And many goodly states and kingdoms seen ;  
 Round many western islands have I been  
 Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.  
 Oft of one wide expanse had I been told  
 That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne :  
 Yet did I never breathe its pure serene  
 Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold .  
 Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
 When a new planet swims into his ken ;  
 Or like stout Cortez—when with eagle eyes  
 He stared at the Pacific, and all his men  
 Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—  
 Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

## ODE ON THE POETS

Bards of Passion and of Mirth  
 Ye have left your souls on earth !  
 Have ye souls in heaven too,  
 Double-lived in regions new ?  
 —Yes, and those of heaven commune  
 With the spheres of sun and moon ;  
 With the noise of fountains wonderful  
 And the parle of voices thunderous ;  
 With the whisper of heaven's trees  
 And one another, in soft ease  
 Seated on Elysian lawns  
 Browsed by none but Dian's fawns ;  
 Underneath large bluebells tented,  
 Where the daisies are rose-scented,  
 And the rose herself has got  
 Perfume which on earth is not ;  
 Where the nightingale doth sing  
 Not a senseless, trancèd thing,  
 But divine melodious truth ;  
 Philosophic numbers smooth ;  
 Tales and golden histories  
 Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then  
 On the earth ye live again ;  
 And the souls ye left behind you  
 Teach us, here, the way to find you  
 Where your other souls are joying,  
 Never slumber'd, never cloying.  
 Here, your earth-born souls still speak  
 To mortals, of their little week ;  
 Of their sorrows and delights ;  
 Of their passions and their spites ;  
 Of their glory and their shame ;  
 What doth strengthen and what maim :—  
 Thus ye teach us, every day,  
 Wisdom, though fled far away.



Bards of Passion and of Mirth  
 Ye have left your souls on earth !  
 Ye have souls in heaven too,  
 Double-lived in regions new !

## ODE TO AUTUMN

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness !  
 Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;  
 Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
 With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run ;  
 To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,  
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;  
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells  
 With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,  
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,  
 Until they think warm days will never cease ;  
 For Summer has o'erbrimm'd their clammy cells

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?  
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find  
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,  
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ;  
 Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,  
 Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook  
 Spares the next swath and all its twin'd flowers ;  
 And sometime like a gleaner thou dost keep  
 Steady thy laden head across a brook ;  
 Or by a cider-press, with patient look,  
 Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring ? Ay, where are they ?  
 Think not of them—thou hast thy music too,  
 While barr'd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,  
 And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue ;  
 Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn  
 Among the river-sallows, borne aloft,  
 Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies ;  
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn  
 Hedge-crickets sing, and now 'with treble soft,  
 The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,  
 And gathering swallows twitter from the skies.

## THE HUMAN SEASONS

Four Seasons fill the measure of the year ;  
 There are four seasons in the mind of Man :  
 He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear  
 Takes in all beauty with an easy span :

He has his Summer, when luxuriously  
 Spring's honey'd cud of youthful thought he loves  
 To ruminate, and by such dreaming high  
 Is nearest unto heaven : quiet coves



His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings  
 He furlcth close ; contented so to look  
 On mists in idleness—to let fair things  
 Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook :—

He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,  
 Or else he would forego his mortal nature.

## MRS. HEMANS

1793-1835

FELICIA DOROTHEA BROWNE was born at Liverpool in the year 1793. In her childhood she lived amid the picturesque and inspiring scenery of North Wales, near to Abergelc. She was not yet out of her teens when, in 1812, she published a volume of poems entitled *Domestic Affections*. She was fortunate in obtaining prizes for her poems, amongst her successes being a prize for the best poem on *Wallace* in 1819, and in 1821 her verses on *Dartmoor* secured another award. She was married in 1812 to Captain Hemans, and has made that name famous in the history of literature by her graceful and tuneful writings. She does not rank as a poetess of the first order, and is most successful in her minor poems, all of which have a certain meed of sweetness. They are distinguished by affection and devotion, warmth and delicacy of feeling, an insight into the deeper teachings of nature, and other good qualities. But she has, perhaps, overdone it in a measure. Scott accuses her of having 'too much flower for the fruit,' and her poems have also been said to 'become languid and fatiguing from their very uniformity of sweetness.' Her larger works are *The Sceptic*, *The Vespers of Palermo*, *The Forest Sanctuary*, and *Records of Women*. Her marriage was not a happy one. Her husband broke down in health, and left her, after six years of domestic infelicity. He went to Italy, and she never saw him again. The latter portion of Mrs. Hemans' life was spent in Dublin, where, in 1834, she published her *Hymns for Childhood*, and *Scenes and Hymns of Life*. Her style has been greatly admired in America, and much recent American verse is moulded on it. She died in Dublin on the 16th of May, 1835. *The Forest Sanctuary* is her best poem, but 'to name those lyrics



and shorter poems from her pen, which live in the memory like favourite tunes, would be an endless task.' But such are *The Graves of a Household* and *The Voice of Spring*.

### SWISS SONG OF THE ALPS

#### ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF AN ANCIENT BATTLE

The Swiss, even to our days, have continued to celebrate the anniversaries of their ancient battles with much solemnity, assembling in the open air on the fields where their ancestors fought, to hear thanksgivings offered up by the priests, and the names of all who shared in the glory of the day enumerated. They afterwards walk in procession to chapels, always erected in the vicinity of such scenes, where masses are sung for the souls of the departed. (See Planta's *History of the Helvetic Confederacy*.)

Look on the white Alps round !  
 If yet they gird a land  
 Where freedom's voice and step are found,  
 Forget ye not the band,  
 The faithful band, our sires, who fell  
 Here, in the narrow battle dell !

If yet, the wilds among,  
 Our silent hearts may burn,  
 When the deep mountain-horn hath rung,  
 And home our steps may turn,—  
 Home !—home !—if still that name be dear,  
 Praise to the men who perished here !

Look on the white Alps round !  
 Up to their shining snows  
 That day the stormy rolling sound,  
 The sound of battle, rose !  
 Their caves prolonged the trumpet's blast,  
 Their dark pines trembled as it passed !

They saw the princely crest  
 They saw the knightly spear,  
 The banner and the mail-clad breast  
 Borne down, and trampled here !  
 They saw—and glorying there they stand,  
 Eternal records to the land.

Praise to the mountain-born,  
 The brethren of the glen !  
 By them no steel array was worn,  
 They stood as peasant-men !  
 They left the vineyard and the field,  
 To break an empire's lance and shield !

Look on the white Alps round !  
 If yet, along their steepes,  
 Our children's fearless feet may bound,  
 Free as the chamois leaps :  
 Teach them in song to bless the band  
 Amidst whose mossy graves we stand !



If, by the wood-fire's blaze,  
 When winter stars gleam cold,  
 The glorious tales of elder days  
 May proudly yet be told,  
 Forget not then the shepherd-race,  
 Who made the hearth a holy place !  
 Look on the white Alps round !  
 If yet the Sabbath-bell  
 Comes o'er them with a gladdening sound,  
 Think on the battle dell !  
 For blood first bathed its flowery sod,  
 That chainless hearts might worship God !

#### THE HOMES OF ENGLAND

Where's the coward that would not dare  
 To fight for such a land ?—*Marmion*.

The stately homes of England !  
 How beautiful they stand,  
 Amidst their tall ancestral trees,  
 O'er all the pleasant land !  
 The deer across their greensward bound,  
 Through shade and sunny gleam ;  
 And the swan glides past them with the sound  
 Of some rejoicing stream.

The merry homes of England !  
 Around their hearths by night,  
 What gladsome looks of household love  
 Meet in the ruddy light !  
 There woman's voice flows forth in song,  
 Or childhood's tale is told,  
 Or lips move tunefully along  
 Some glorious page of old.

The blessed homes of England !  
 How softly on their bowers  
 Is laid the holy quietness  
 That breathes from Sabbath-hours !  
 Solemn, yet sweet, the church-bell's chime  
 Floats through their woods at morn ;  
 All other sounds, in that still time,  
 Of breeze and leaf are born.

The cottage homes of England !  
 By thousands on her plains,  
 They are smiling o'er the silvery brooks,  
 And round the hamlet fanes.  
 Through glowing orchards forth they peep,  
 Each from its nook of leaves ;  
 And fearless there the lowly sleep,  
 As the bird beneath their eaves.

The free fair homes of England !  
 Long, long, in hut and hall,  
 May hearts of native proof be reared  
 To guard each hallowed wall !  
 And green for ever be the groves,  
 And bright the flowery sod,  
 Where first the child's glad spirit loves  
 Its country and its God !



## THE DEATH OF CLANRONALD

It was in the Battle of Sheriffmoor that young Clanronald fell, leading on the Highlanders of the right wing. His death dispirited the assailants, who began to waver. But Glengary, chief of a rival branch of the clan Colla, started from the ranks, and, waving his bonnet round his head, cried out: 'To-day for revenge, and to-morrow for mourning!' The Highlanders received a new impulse from his words, and, charging with redoubled fury, bore down all before them. (See the *Quarterly Review* article of 'Culloden Papers.')

Oh! ne'er be Clanronald the valiant forgot!  
Still fearless and first in the combat, he fell;  
But we paused not one tear-drop to shed o'er the spot,  
We spared not one moment to murmur 'Farewell.'  
We heard but the battle-word given by the chief,  
'To-day for revenge, and to-morrow for grief!'

And wildly, Clanronald! we echoed the vow,  
With the tear on our cheek, and the sword in our hand;  
Young son of the brave! we may weep for thee now,  
For well has thy death been avenged by thy band,  
When they joined, in wild chorus, the cry of the chief,  
'To-day for revenge, and to-morrow for grief!'

Thy dirge in that hour was the bugle's wild call,  
The clash of the claymore, the shout of the brave;  
But now thy own bard may lament for thy fall,  
And the soft voice of melody sigh o'er thy grave—  
While Albion remembers the words of the chief,  
'To-day for revenge, and to-morrow for grief!'

Thou art fallen, O fearless one! flower of thy race:  
Descendant of heroes! thy glory is set:  
But thy kindred, the sons of the battle and chase,  
Have proved that thy spirit is bright in them yet!  
Nor vainly have echoed the words of the chief,  
'To-day for revenge, and to-morrow for grief!'

## REV. JOHN KEBLE

1792-1866

'THE force and significance of poetry,' says Mr. Shaw, 'in the still current epoch are strikingly seen in the early history of the Oxford Movement, which was heralded by poetry, awakened by a poet, and led by poets. In a sermon preached by John Keble, the most famous of its leaders afterwards discerned the first note of the movement.'

John Keble was born at Fairford, in Gloucestershire, his



father being at that time Vicar of the parish. The Vicar was a man of deep learning, who preferred having the teaching of his son in his own hands to the more usual alternative of sending him to school. In this case the preference was justified, for the pupil, in his fifteenth year, obtained a scholarship at Corpus Christi. His subsequent career at Oxford was an exceptionally distinguished one. At nineteen he had gained a double first and a Fellowship at Oriel. This caused him to remain at the University until 1823, when he left to act as curate to his father. He was still in this position when, in 1833, he preached an Assize Sermon at Oxford. It was to this discourse, published under the title of *National Apostasy*, that Newman attributed the rise of the Oxford Movement. During these ten years he had refused many offers of preferment, but in 1835 he accepted the living of Hursley, near Winchester, where he spent the remainder of his unambitious and uneventful life. From 1833 to 1841 he was Professor of Poetry at Oxford.

It would be impossible to overestimate the benefit which this saintly and gifted poet has conferred upon the world by his *Christian Year*, which was published first in 1827, and has run, and is running, through almost countless editions. It is so well known that it only calls for mention here. The public have supplied the criticism in the popularity which it ever enjoys. But we may quote these forcible words of Mr. Shaw in connection with it: 'In Keble met for the first time the eye and the sensibility of a poet, the cultivated judgment and classical taste of a trained scholar, the convinced faith of a Christian, and the devotional spirit of a loyal Anglican.' In 1846 appeared *Lyra Innocentium*, which was not so successful.

#### FROM 'THE CHRISTIAN YEAR'

##### CHRISTMAS DAY

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God.—ST. LUKE ii. 13.

What sudden blaze of song  
Spreads o'er the expanse of Heaven?  
In waves of light it thrills along,  
The angelic signal given—  
'Glory to God!' from yonder central fire  
Flows out the echoing lay beyond the starry choir;



Like circles widening round  
 Upon a clear blue river,  
 Orb after orb, the wondrous sound  
 Is echoed on for ever :  
 ' Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,  
 And love towards men of love—salvation and release.'

\* \* \* \* \*

Wrapp'd in His swaddling bands,  
 And in His manger laid,  
 The Hope and Glory of all lands  
 Is come to the world's aid :  
 No peaceful home upon His cradle smil'd,  
 sts rudely went and came, where slept the royal Child.

But where Thou dwellest, Lord,  
 No other thought should be,  
 Once duly welcom'd and ador'd,  
 How should I part with Thee ?  
 Bethlehem must lose Thee soon, but Thou wilt grace  
 The single heart to be Thy sure abiding-place.

Thee on the bosom laid  
 Of a pure virgin mind,  
 In quiet ever, and in shade,  
 Shepherd and sage may find ;  
 They, who have bow'd untaught to Nature's sway,  
 And they, who follow Truth along her star-pav'd way.

The pastoral spirits first  
 Approach Thee, Babe divine,  
 For they in lowly thoughts are nurs'd  
 Meet for Thy lowly shrine ;  
 Sooner than they should miss where Thou dost dwell,  
 Angels from Heaven will stoop to guide them to Thy cell.

Still, as the day comes round  
 For Thee to be reveal'd,  
 By wakeful shepherds Thou art found  
 Abiding in the field,  
 All through the wintry heaven and chill night air,  
 In music and in light Thou dawnest on their prayer.

O faint not ye for fear—  
 What though your wandering sheep,  
 Reckless of what they see and hear,  
 Lie lost in wilful sleep ?  
 High Heaven in mercy to your sad annoy  
 Still greets you with glad tidings of immortal joy.

Think on the eternal home  
 The Saviour left for you ;  
 Think on the Lord most holy, come  
 To dwell with hearts untrue :  
 So shall ye tread untir'd His pastoral ways,  
 And in the darkness sing your carol of high praise.



## ST. STEPHEN'S DAY

He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.—  
ACTS vii. 55.

As rays around the source of light  
Stream upward ere he glow in sight,  
And watching by his future flight  
Set the clear heavens on fire ;  
So on the King of Martyrs wait  
Three chosen bands,<sup>1</sup> in royal state,  
And all earth owns, of good and great  
Is gathered in that choir.

One presses on, and welcomes death  
One calmly yields his willing breath,  
Nor slow, nor hurrying, but in faith  
Content to die or live :  
And some, the darlings of their Lord,  
Play smiling with the flame and sword  
And, ere they speak, to His sure word  
Unconscious witness give.

Foremost and nearest to His throne,  
By perfect robes of triumph known,  
And likest Him in look and tone,  
The holy Stephen kneels.  
With steadfast gaze, as when the sky  
Flew open to his fainting eye,  
Which, like a fading lamp, flashed high,  
Seeing what death conceals.

\* \* \* \* \*

## ST. MATTHIAS' DAY

Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection.—ACTS i. 21, 22.

Who is God's chosen priest ?  
He who on Christ stands waiting day and night,  
Who traced His holy steps, nor ever ceased,  
From Jordan banks to Bethphage height :

Who hath learned lowliness  
From His Lord's cradle, patience from His Cross ;  
Whom poor men's eyes and hearts consent to bless ;  
To whom, for Christ, the world is loss.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dread Searcher of the hearts,  
Thou who didst seal by Thy descending Dove.  
Thy servant's choice, O help us in our parts,  
Else helpless found, to learn and teach Thy love.

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<sup>1</sup> *Wheatley on the Common Prayer*, chap. v., sect. iv. 2. 'As there are three kinds of martyrdom, the first both in will and deed, which is the highest ; the second in will but not in deed ; the third in deed but not in will ; so the Church commemorates these martyrs in the same order : St. Stephen first, who suffered death both in will and deed ; St. John the Evangelist next, who suffered martyrdom in will but not in deed ; the holy Innocents last, who suffered in deed but not in will.'



## THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.—  
St. LUKE i. 28.

\* \* \* \* \*  
When wandering here a little span,  
Thou took'st on Thee to rescue man,  
Thou hadst no earthly sire :  
That wedded love we prize so dear,  
As if our Heaven and home were here.  
It lit in thee no fire.

On no sweet sister's faithful breast  
Wouldst Thou Thine aching forehead rest,  
On no kind brother lean :  
But who, O perfect filial heart,  
E'er did like Thee a true son's part,  
Endearing, firm, serene ?

\* \* \* \* \*  
Ave Maria ! blessed Maid !  
Lily of Eden's fragrant shade,  
Who can express the love  
That nurtured thee so pure and sweet,  
Making thy heart a shelter meet  
For Jesus' holy Dove ?

Ave Maria ! Mother blest,  
To whom caressing and caressed,  
Clings the Eternal Child ;  
Favoured beyond archangels' dream,  
When first on thee with tenderest gleam  
Thy new-born Saviour smiled :—

Ave Maria ! thou whose name  
All but adoring love may claim,  
Yet may we reach thy shrine ;  
For He, thy Son and Saviour, vows  
To crown all lowly lofty brows  
With love and joy like thine.

Blessed is the womb that bare Him—blessed  
The bosom where His lips were pressed !—  
But rather blessed are they  
Who hear His word and keep it well,  
The living homes where Christ shall dwell,  
And never pass away.

## GOOD FRIDAY

He is despised and rejected of men.—ISA. liii. 3.

Is it not strange, the darkest hour  
That ever dawned on sinful earth  
Should touch the heart with softer power  
For comfort, than an angel's mirth ?  
That to the Cross the mourner's eye should turn  
Sooner than where the stars of Christmas burn ?



Sooner than where the Easter sun  
 Shines glorious on yon open grave,  
 And to and fro the tidings run,  
 ' Who died to heal, is risen to save ' ?  
 Sooner than where upon the Saviour's friends  
 The very Comforter in light and love descends ?

Yet so it is : for duly there  
 The bitter herbs of earth are set,  
 Till tempered by the Saviour's prayer,  
 And with the Saviour's life-blood wet,  
 They turn to sweetness, and drop holy balm,  
 Soft as imprisoned martyr's deathbed calm.

All turn to sweet—but most of all  
 That bitterest to the lip of pride,  
 When hopes presumptuous fade and fall,  
 Or Friendship scorns us, duly tried,  
 Or Love, the flower that closes up for fear  
 When rude and selfish spirits breathe too near.

Then like a long-forgotten strain  
 Comes sweeping o'er the heart forlorn  
 What sunshine hours had taught in vain  
 Of Jesus suffering shame and scorn,  
 As in all lowly hearts He suffers still,  
 While we triumphant ride and have the world at will.

His piercèd hands in vain would hide  
 His face from rude reproachful gaze,  
 His ears are open to abide  
 The wildest storm the tongue can raise,  
 He who with one rough word, some early day,  
 Their idol world and them shall sweep for aye away.

But we by Fancy may assuage  
 The festering sore by Fancy made,  
 Down in some lonely hermitage  
 Like wounded pilgrims safely laid.  
 Where gentlest breezes whisper souls distressed,  
 That Love yet lives, and Patience shall find rest.

Oh ! shame beyond the bitterest thought  
 That evil spirit ever framed,  
 That sinners know what Jesus wrought,  
 Yet feel their haughty hearts untamed :  
 That souls in refuge, holding by the Cross,  
 Should wince and fret at this world's little loss.

Lord of my heart, by Thy last cry,  
 Let not Thy blood on earth be spent !  
 Lo, at Thy feet I fainting lie,  
 Mine eyes upon Thy wounds are bent,  
 Upon Thy streaming wounds my weary eyes  
 Wait like the parchèd earth on April skies.

Wash me, and dry these bitter tears,  
 O let my heart no further roam,  
 'Tis Thine by vows and hopes and fears  
 Long since—O call Thy wanderer home ;  
 To that dear home, safe in Thy wounded side,  
 Where only broken hearts their sin and shame may hide.



## TOM HOOD

1799-1845

TOM HOOD, as he is generally called, is remarkable for the curious mixture of grotesque humour with depth of feeling which marks his genius. He is only entitled to rank as a poet of the second order, but amongst his brethren of that order he must be accorded a high place.

Hood was born on the 23rd of May, 1799. In 1821 he became assistant editor of the *London Magazine*, to which a large number of the leading writers of the day contributed. Amongst these were such kindred spirits as De Quincy, Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, and Reynolds.

It was in the *London Magazine* that Hood's poem on *Hope* was published. Reynolds collaborated with him in the production of *Odes and Addresses*, which were published anonymously. *Whims and Oddities* soon followed. Hood was now rapidly rising in fame, when unfortunately his publisher failed, and the poet lost very considerably. He was obliged, through stress of circumstances, to go to Coblenz with his family, and by the practice of a very strict economy to try in some measure to redeem his fortunes. This happened in 1835. From Coblenz the family removed to Ostend in 1837, and finally came back to London in 1840. In the following year we find him editing the *New Monthly*, and in 1843 his own magazine was started. A pension, with reversion to his wife and daughter, was settled on him in 1844, and on the 3rd of May, 1845, he died.

Hood is chiefly remembered as the author of *Eugene Aram*, the *Song of the Shirt*, and the *Bridge of Sighs*, three poems which are contained in every 'Popular Reciter,' and a number of exquisitely comic pieces, which are in their own style quite unequalled by anything else in the language. Those who look upon him as merely a humorist do him a great injustice. There can be no question about his being the greatest wit of his age, but he also proved himself to be capable of the deepest seriousness and most delicate pathos at times. He can also command 'a pencil dipped in living light' when he wishes to depict the beauties of Nature or point the morals of her teaching, as in *Hero and Leander*, or the *Plea of the Midsummer Fairies*. As



for his fun, it is supreme. Perhaps his perpetual punning may pall a little at times, but there is a clearness and a freshness about his constant stream of humour which is as refreshing as the spray of a waterfall. It is utterly devoid of vulgarity or coarseness, and though we may not laugh at it, 'tis strange if we are not amused.

Hood has been called by Mr. W. M. Rossetti 'the finest English poet between the generation of Shelley and the generation of Tennyson.' Lowell's verses, *To the Memory of Hood*, so well express his virtues that we venture to quote them here :

Another star 'neath Time's horizon dropped,  
 To gleam o'er unknown lands and seas ;  
 Another heart that beat for freedom stopped,—  
 What mournful words are these !  
 O Love Divine, that claspest our tired earth,  
 And lullest it upon thy heart,  
 Thou knowest how much a gentle soul is worth  
 To teach men what thou art !  
 His was a spirit that to all thy poor  
 Was kind as slumber after pain :  
 Why ope so soon thy heaven-deep Quiet's door  
 And call him home again ?  
 Freedom needs all her poets : it is they,  
 Who give her aspirations wings,  
 And to the wiser law of music sway  
 Her wild imaginings.  
 Yet thou hast called him, nor art thou unkind,  
 O Love Divine, for 'tis thy will  
 That gracious natures leave their love behind  
 To work for Freedom still.  
 Let laurelled marbles weigh on other tombs,  
 Let anthems peal for other dead,  
 Rustling the bannered depth of minster-glooms  
 With their exulting spread.  
 His epitaph shall mock the short-lived stone,  
 No lichen shall its lines efface,  
 He needs these few and simple lines alone  
 To mark his resting-place :—  
 ' Here lies a Poet. Stranger, if to thee  
 His claim to memory be obscure,  
 If thou wouldst learn how truly great was he,  
 Go, ask it of the poor.'

#### A PARENTAL ODE TO MY SON

AGED THREE YEARS AND FIVE MONTHS

Thou happy, happy elf !  
 Let stop—first let me kiss away that tear)—  
 Thou tiny image of myself !  
 (My love, he's poking peas into his ear !)



Thou merry, laughing sprite !  
 With spirits feather-light,  
 Untouched by sorrow and unsoiled by sin—  
 (Good heavens ! the child is swallowing a pin !)

Thou little tricky Puck !  
 With antic toys so funnily bestuck,  
 Light as the singing bird that wings the air—  
 (The door ! the door ! he'll tumble down the stair !)  
 Thou darling of thy sire !  
 (Why, Jane, he'll set his pinafore a-fire !)  
 Thou imp of mirth and joy !  
 In Love's dear chain so strong and bright a link,  
 Thou idol of thy parents—(Drat the boy ! There goes my ink !)

Thou cherub !—but of earth ;  
 Fit playfellow for Fays, by moonlight pale,  
 In harmless sport and mirth,  
 (That dog will bite him if he pulls its tail !)  
 Thou human humming-bee, extracting honey  
 From every blossom in the world that blows,  
 Singing in youth's Elysium ever sunny—  
 (Another tumble !—that's his precious nose !)

Thy father's pride and hope !  
 (He'll break the mirror with that skipping-rope !)  
 With pure heart newly stamped from Nature's mint—  
 (Where *did* he learn that squint ?)  
 Thou young domestic dove !  
 (He'll have that jug off with another shove !)  
 Dear nursling of the hymeneal nest !  
 (Are those torn clothes his best ?)  
 Little epitome of man !  
 (He'll climb upon the table, that's his plan !)  
 Touched with the beauteous tints of dawning life—  
 (He's got a knife !)

Thou enviable being !  
 No storms, no clouds, in thy blue sky foreseeing,  
 Play on, play on,  
 My elfin John !  
 Toss the light ball—bestride the stick—  
 (I knew so many cakes would make him sick !)  
 With fancies buoyant as the thistle-down,  
 Prompting the face grotesque, and antic brisk,  
 With many a lamb-like frisk—  
 (He's got the scissors, snipping at your gown !)

Thou pretty opening rose !  
 (Go to your mother, child, and wipe your nose !)  
 Balmy and breathing music like the South,  
 (He really brings my heart into my mouth !)  
 Fresh as the morn, and brilliant as its star,  
 (I wish that window had an iron bar !)  
 Old as the hawk, yet gentle as the dove—  
 (I'll tell you what, my love,  
 I cannot write unless he's sent above !)



## I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER

## I

I remember, I remember,  
 The house where I was born,  
 The little window where the sun  
 Came peeping in at morn ;  
 He never came a wink too soon,  
 Nor brought too long a day,  
 But now I often wish the night  
 Had borne my breath away !

## II

I remember, I remember  
 The roses, red and white,  
 The violets and the lily-cups,  
 Those flowers made of light !  
 The lilacs where the robin built,  
 And where my brother set  
 The laburnum on his birthday,—  
 The tree is living yet !

## III

I remember, I remember,  
 Where I was used to swing,  
 And thought the air must rush as fresh  
 To swallows on the wing ;  
 My spirit flew in feathers then,  
 That is so heavy now ;  
 And summer pools could hardly cool  
 The fever on my brow !

## IV

I remember, I remember,  
 The fir-trees dark and high ;  
 I used to think their slender tops  
 Were close against the sky :  
 It was a childish ignorance,  
 But now 'tis little joy  
 To know I'm further off from heaven  
 Than when I was a boy.

## FAITHLESS SALLY BROWN

## AN OLD BALLAD

Young Ben he was a nice young man,  
 A carpenter by trade ;  
 And he fell in love with Sally Brown,  
 That was a lady's maid.

But as they fetch'd a walk one day,  
 They met a press-gang crew :  
 And Sally she did faint away,  
 Whilst Ben he was brought to.



The Boatswain swore with wicked words,  
 Enough to shock a saint,  
 That though she did seem in a fit,  
 'Twas nothing but a feint.

'Come, girl,' said he, 'hold up your head  
 He'll be as good as me ;  
 For when your swain is in our boat,  
 A boatswain he will be.'

So when they'd made their game of her,  
 And taken off her elf,  
 She roused, and found she only was  
 A-coming to herself.

'And is he gone, and is he gone ?'  
 She cried, and wept outright  
 'Then I will to the water side,  
 And see him out of sight.'

A waterman came up to her,  
 'Now, young woman,' said he,  
 'If you weep on so, you will make  
 Eye-water in the sea.'

'Alas ! they've taken my beau Ben  
 To sail with old Benbow ;'  
 And her woe began to run afresh,  
 As if she'd said Gee woe !

Says he, 'They've only taken him  
 To the Tender ship, you see ;'  
 'The Tender ship,' cried Sally Brown,  
 'What a hard-ship that must be

'Oh ! would I were a mermaid now,  
 For then I'd follow him ;  
 But oh !—I'm not a fish-woman,  
 And so I cannot swim.

'Alas ! I was not born beneath  
 The Virgin and the Scales,  
 So I must curse my cruel stars,  
 And walk about in Wales.'

Now Ben had sailed to many a place  
 That's underneath the world ;  
 But in two years the ship came home,  
 And all her sails were furl'd.

But when he call'd on Sally Brown,  
 To see how she got on,  
 He found she'd got another Ben,  
 Whose Christian name was John.

'O Sally Brown, O Sally Brown,  
 How could you serve me so ?  
 I've met with many a breeze before,  
 But never such a blow.'



Then reading on his 'bacco box,  
 He heaved a bitter sigh,  
 And then began to eye his pipe,  
 And then to pipe his eye.

And then he tried to sing ' All's Well,'  
 But could not though he tried ;  
 His head was turned, and so he chewed  
 His pigtail till he died.

His death, which happened in his berth,  
 At forty-odd befell :  
 They went and told the sexton, and  
 The sexton toll'd the bell.

#### THE SONG OF THE SHIRT

With fingers weary and worn,  
 With eyelids heavy and red,  
 A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,  
 Plying her needle and thread—  
 Stitch—stitch—stitch !  
 In poverty, hunger, and dirt ;  
 And still with a voice of dolorous pitch,  
 She sang the ' Song of the Shirt !'

' Work—work—work !  
 While the cock is crowing aloof !  
 And work—work—work !  
 Till the stars shine through the roof !  
 It's oh ! to be a slave,  
 Along with the barbarous Turk,  
 Where woman has never a soul to save,  
 If this is Christian work !

' Work—work—work !  
 Till the brain begins to swim ;  
 Work—work—work !  
 Till the eyes are heavy and dim !  
 Seam, and gusset, and band—  
 Band, and gusset, and seam,  
 Till over the buttons I fall asleep,  
 And sew them on in a dream !

' Oh ! men with sisters dear !  
 Oh ! men with mothers and wives !  
 It is not linen you're wearing out,  
 But human creatures' lives !  
 Stitch—stitch—stitch !  
 In poverty, hunger, and dirt ;  
 Sewing at once, with a double thread,  
 A shroud as well as a shirt.

' But why do I talk of Death ?  
 That phantom of grisly bone ;  
 I hardly fear its terrible shape,  
 It seems so like my own—  
 It seems so like my own,  
 Because of the fasts I keep ;  
 O God ! that bread should be so dear,  
 And flesh and blood so cheap !



Work—work—work !  
 My labour never flags ;  
 And what are its wages ? A bed of straw,  
 A crust of bread—and rags.  
 That shattered roof,—and this naked floor,—  
 A table,—a broken chair,—  
 And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank  
 For sometimes falling there !

' Work—work—work !  
 From weary chime to chime,  
 Work—work—work—  
 As prisoners work for crime !  
 Band, and gusset, and seam,  
 Seam, and gusset, and band,  
 Till the heart is sick, and the brain benumbed  
 As well as the weary hand.

' Work—work—work !  
 In the dull December light,  
 And work—work—work !  
 When the weather is warm and bright ;  
 While underneath the eaves  
 The brooding swallows cling,  
 As if to show me their sunny backs  
 And twit me with the spring.

' Oh ! but to breathe the breath  
 Of the cowslip and primrose sweet—  
 With the sky above my head,  
 And the grass beneath my feet !  
 For only one short hour  
 To feel as I used to feel,  
 Before I knew the woes of want  
 And the walk that costs a meal !

' Oh ! but for one short hour !  
 A respite however brief !  
 No blessed leisure for love or hope,  
 But only time for grief !  
 A little weeping would ease my heart,  
 But in their briny bed  
 My tears must stop, for every drop  
 Hinders needle and thread !'

With fingers weary and worn,  
 With eyelids heavy and red,  
 A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,  
 Plying her needle and thread—  
 Stitch—stitch—stitch !  
 In poverty, hunger, and dirt ;  
 And still with a voice of dolorous pitch,—  
 Would that its tone could reach the rich !—  
 She sang this ' Song of the Shirt !'



## THOMAS BABINGTON, LORD MACAULAY

1800-1859

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY was the son of Zachary Macaulay, who is famous in history as one of the earliest opponents of the slave trade. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, of which he eventually became a Fellow. He was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, entered Parliament in 1830, and went to India in 1834, as President of the Law Commission and a Member of the Council in Calcutta. On his return he re-entered the House of Commons, and became successively Secretary of State for War and Paymaster of the Forces. He was raised to the Peerage in 1857, and died on the 28th of December, 1859. 'He was buried in Westminster Abbey, in Poets' Corner, his favourite haunt.'

Lord Macaulay was distinguished as a poet, a statesman, an essayist, and a historian. As a poet, he is chiefly celebrated for his *Lays of Ancient Rome*, but he also wrote many exquisitely finished poems on miscellaneous subjects. Two of his poems were suggested by the struggle of the Huguenots with the Catholics in France, and two by famous incidents in English history—namely, the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the overthrow of Charles I. at the Battle of Naseby. His *Lines to the Memory of Pitt*, which were written when he was only thirteen years of age, may be classed under the head of historical poems, as may also his translation of the poem *The Deliverance of Vienna*, which commemorates the victory which saved Europe from the Ottoman horde. The longest of his miscellaneous poems is the *Marriage of Tirzah and Ahirad*, which was suggested by a verse in the Book of Genesis. His translation of the *Dies Irae* and his *Sermon in a Churchyard* are also worthy of mention.

The *Lays of Ancient Rome* were published in 1842. Sir George Trevelyan tells us concerning them 'the public approbation needed no prompter.' Eighteen thousand copies were sold in ten years, forty thousand in twenty years, and by June, 1875, upwards of a hundred thousand copies had passed into the hands of readers. Nor has their popularity begun to wane.

Dean Milman, in his *Memoir of Lord Macaulay*, speaking of



the poet's style, says: 'Its characteristics were vigour and animation, copiousness, clearness, above all, sound English, now a rare excellence.'

IVRY<sup>1</sup>

## A SONG OF THE HUGUENOTS

Now glory to the Lord of Hosts, from whom all glories are !  
 And glory to our Sovereign Liege, King Henry of Navarre !  
 Now let there be the merry sound of music and of dance,  
 Through thy corn-fields green, and sunny vines, oh pleasant land of France !  
 And thou, Rochelle, our own Rochelle, proud city of the waters,  
 Again let rapture light the eyes of all thy mourning daughters.  
 As thou wert constant in our ills, be joyous in our joy,  
 For cold, and stiff, and still are they who wrought thy walls annoy  
 Hurrah ! Hurrah ! a single field hath turned the chance of war ;  
 Hurrah ! Hurrah ! for Ivry, and Henry of Navarre.

Oh ! how our hearts were beating, when, at the dawn of day,  
 We saw the army of the League drawn out in long array ;  
 With all its priest-led citizens, and all its rebel peers,  
 And Appenzel's stout infantry, and Egmont's Flemish spears.  
 There rode the brood of false Lorraine, the curses of our land !  
 And dark Mayenne was in the midst, a truncheon in his hand :  
 And, as we looked on them, we thought of Seine's empurpled flood  
 And good Coligni's hoary hair all dabbled with his blood ;  
 And we cried unto the living God, who rules the fate of war,  
 To fight for His own holy name, and Henry of Navarre.

The King is come to marshal us, in all his armour drest,  
 And he has bound a snow-white plume upon his gallant crest.  
 He looked upon his people, and a tear was in his eye ;  
 He looked upon the traitors, and his glance was stern and high,  
 Right graciously he smiled on us, as rolled from wing to wing,  
 Down all our line, a deafening shout, ' God save our lord the King !'  
 ' And if my standard-bearer fall, as fall full well he may—  
 For never saw I promise yet of such a bloody fray—  
 Press where ye see my white plume shine, amidst the ranks of war,  
 And be your oriflamme to-day the helmet of Navarre.'

Hurrah ! the foes are moving ! Hark to the mingled din  
 Of fife, and steed, and trump, and drum, and roaring culverin.  
 The fiery Duke is pricking fast across St. André's plain,  
 With all the hireling chivalry of Guelders and Almayne.

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<sup>1</sup> The Battle of Ivry, fought in 1590, was the most brilliant victory of Henry IV. of France, better known as Henry of Navarre. In it he defeated the Guises and the League, who had their hands deep dyed in the blood of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Although at Ivry Henry was the champion of Protestantism in France, he was by no means a rigorous enthusiast, and when the time came was quite willing to accept the Catholic faith as one of the elements of the compromise which secured his succession to the throne. Paris, in his opinion, was well worth a Mass, but that famous saying had not been uttered, and would have been scouted indignantly, by the men in whose mouths Macaulay has placed his spirited verses.



Now by the lips of those ye love, fair gentlemen of France,  
 Charge for the golden lilies,—upon them with the lance !  
 A thousand spurs are striking deep, a thousand spears in rest,  
 A thousand knights are pressing close behind the snow-white crest ;  
 And in they burst, and on they rushed, while like a guiding star,  
 Amidst the thickest carnage blazed the helmet of Navarre.

Now, God be praised, the day is ours ! Mayenne hath turned his rein.  
 D'Aumale hath cried for quarter. The Flemish Count is slain.  
 Their ranks are breaking like thin clouds before a Biscay gale ;  
 The field is heaped with bleeding steeds, and flags, and cloven mail.  
 And then we thought on vengeance, and, all along our van,  
 ' Remember St. Bartholomew ! ' was passed from man to man ;  
 But out spake gentle Henry, ' No Frenchman is my foe :  
 Down, down with every foreigner, but let your brethren go.'  
 Oh ! was there ever such a knight, in friendship or in war,  
 As our Sovereign Lord, King Henry, the soldier of Navarre ?

Right well fought all the Frenchmen who fought for France to-day ;  
 And many a lordly banner God gave them for a prey.  
 But we of the religion have borne us best in fight ;  
 And the good lord of Rosny has ta'en the cornet white.  
 Our own true Maximilian the cornet white hath ta'en,  
 The cornet white with crosses black, the flag of false Lorraine.  
 Up with it high ; unfurl it wide ; that all the host may know  
 How God hath humbled the proud house which wrought His church  
 such woe.

Then on the ground, while trumpets sound their loudest points of war,  
 Fling the red shreds, a foot-cloth meet for Henry of Navarre.

Ho ! maidens of Vienna ! Ho ! matrons of Lucerne !  
 Weep, weep, and rend your hair for those who never shall return.  
 Ho ! Philip, send, for charity, thy Mexican pistoles,  
 That Antwerp monks may sing a mass for thy poor spearmen's souls.  
 Ho ! gallant nobles of the League, look that your arms be bright ;  
 Ho ! burghers of Saint Geneviève, keep watch and ward to-night.  
 For our God hath crushed the tyrant, our God hath raised the slave,  
 And mocked the counsel of the wise, and the valour of the brave.  
 Then glory to His holy name, from whom all glories are ;  
 And glory to our Sovereign lord, King Henry of Navarre.

## ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

1809-1892

' THE fate of Tennyson's writings in the future,' says Mr. Shaw, in closing an able and exhaustive sketch of the great Laureate's life and work, ' the future only can show. But he has been to his own age much more than any other poet has ever been to his ; he has been not only a pure well-head of noblest song, but also an unfailing spring of comfort, stimulus, and power towards the



worthiest ends. No other English poet has ever been in such close and sympathetic touch, not with Nature and Man alone, but with so many sides of contemporary life, in such intimate intelligence with the most beneficent forces of his age. This age has found in his verse a melodious voice for its thoughts, longings, and aspirations ; but has found something better also, a corrective, if it will only listen, to much that is unsound and dangerous in these. Whatever posterity may think of him, he has laid his contemporaries under a debt of gratitude that could hardly be exaggerated.'

A noble tribute this to the memory of a noble mind.

Alfred Tennyson was one of seven sons of the Rector of Somersby, near Horncastle, and first saw the light on the 6th of August, 1809. Two of his brothers shared with him the liking, and in a measure the gift, for verse-making. These were Frederick and Charles. Alfred lived chiefly in his native county until he had completed his nineteenth year, a circumstance which naturally tended to give 'local colour' to much of his earlier verse. His first educational institution was the grammar-school of Louth, at which he was well taught from his eighth till his twelfth year. He was further educated by his father, and by private tutors, at his own home. In childhood he began to 'stir up the gift that was in him' by putting his thoughts in rhyme. His chief companion and sympathizer in these early efforts was his brother Charles. In Alfred's eighteenth year the young poets were in need of money to cover the cost of a contemplated tour, and, guided by the advice of the coachman, they went to a bookseller at Louth and sold the copyright of such verses as they had in stock for the substantial sum of £20. The works were duly issued in a decent volume under the title of *Poems by Two Brothers*. The book contained one hundred and two poems, but there was no clue given as to which were by Alfred and which were by Charles. The biographer of the greater poet must therefore be content with a passing reference to them as containing the first-fruits of his budding genius.

It has been commonly supposed that Tennyson was all along, if not rich, at least well off. This, it seems, is a mistake. When the home of his mother at Somersby Rectory, his early home, was broken up, Tennyson came to London. Mrs. Ritchie, one of his personal friends, states that he was poor, and had to



meet that wholesome struggle with poverty which brings the vagueness of genius into contact with reality. He lived at the Temple, 58, Lincoln's Inn Fields, and elsewhere.

Mrs. Ritchie, coming to her own personal intercourse with the poet, has some pleasant notes on Tennyson's residence at the Isle of Wight, Farringford House, near Freshwater.

'The house at Farringford itself seemed like a charmed palace, with green walls without and speaking walls within. There hung Dante, with his solemn nose and wreath; Italy gleamed over the doorways; friends' faces lined the way; books filled the shelves; and a glow of crimson was everywhere. The great oriel drawing-room window was full of green and golden leaves, of the sound of birds, and of the distant sea. The very names of the people who have stood upon the lawn at Farringford would be an interesting study for some future biographer—Longfellow, Kingsley, the Duke of Argyll, Locker, Dean Stanley, the Prince Consort. Garibaldi once planted a tree there. The lovely places and sweet country all about Farringford are not among the least of its charms. Beyond the primrose island itself and the blue Solent the New Forest spreads its shades, and the green depths reach to the very shores.'

Alfred went to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1828. He cannot be said to have distinguished himself as a student, beyond obtaining the Chancellor's Medal in 1829 for a poem in blank verse on the prosaic subject of Timbuctoo. This production of the future Laureate was favourably noticed in the *Athenæum*, and was greatly admired by the inner circle at the University. In spite of this success, Tennyson, strangely enough, left his college without having proceeded to a degree.

In 1830 a Cornhill publisher produced a volume entitled *Poems, chiefly Lyrical, by Alfred Tennyson*. In this collection were fifty-three pieces, and amongst them such poems as *Claribel*, *The Ballad of Oriana*, and *Mariana in the Moated Grange*. Many of these gave clear evidence that 'a minstrel of brilliant promise was trying his 'prentice hand upon the lyre of English song.' There was a certain amount of coldness evinced in its reception by some of the hypercritical, though, on the whole, it met with a reception which, for a first attempt, was distinctly encouraging to the young poet.

A second volume appeared in 1833, which was an improve-



ment on the first. It contained, amongst many other poems, *The Miller's Daughter*, *The Queen of the May*, *The Lady of Shalott*, and *The Lotus Eaters*. It may seem incredible that this bouquet of sweet song could be unfavourably criticised, viewing it as we must in the light of its subsequent popularity. Yet such was the case. The critics were as unkind as they were unjust, and a feeling of resentment almost equal to Byron's settled down upon the poet's spirit. Though he had replied, not very happily, indeed, to a former attack, he took refuge in silence now. *The Lover's Tale*, which he had composed at Cambridge, and now had ready for the press, was held back, and did not appear until 1879. To add to his dejection, Arthur Hallam, his most revered and devoted friend, died suddenly in Vienna in 1833, a sorrow which cast a deep and lasting gloom over the poet's soul.

For nine years from the date of these calamities Tennyson published nothing. Yet in private his brain and his pen were not at rest. In the quietude of his study he was bringing to life the best and sweetest offspring of his latent genius. He was educating himself, and the flower of his divine muse was unfolding its rich beauties leaf by leaf, as does an exotic fed and nourished by the warmth of the garden-house. No one now can grudge the recluse the sanctity of his inner chamber, when they remember that *Lady Clara Vere de Vere*, *Dora*, and *The Gardener's Daughter* were born there. It was there, too, that the gifted singer gave of his best to the building up of *Locksley Hall*. Two volumes appeared in 1842, which brought the sternest and most exacting of critics to the poet's feet, and made him known to the world as an acknowledged and accepted exponent of the subtlest powers of song. The most eminent men of letters bowed before their unquestioned merits, the triumph was complete, and the once-despised versifier rose to the highest rung of popular favour and literary fame.

It was not long after this that Sir Robert Peel made Tennyson a grant of £200 a year from the Government Exchequer. This was not merely a welcome addition to the poet's moderate income, but a reward which many felt to be well deserved. Bulwer Lytton, however, was not pleased, and gave that fact out to the world in *The New Timon*. This time Tennyson retorted somewhat severely through the medium of *Punch*.



In 1847 Tennyson's name was again brought prominently before the public by the publication of *The Princess, a Medley*. Its theme is thus summarized by Dr. Collier :

'At a little picnic on the grassy turf within a ruin, seven college men tell the tale in turn, and

'The women sang  
Between the rougher voices of the men,  
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind.

A prince and princess are betrothed, but have never met. He loves the unseen beauty ; she, influenced by two strong-minded widows, hates the thoughts of marriage, and founds a University for girls. Disguised in female dress, the Prince and two friends don the academic robes of lilac silk, and mingle with the gentle undergraduates. All goes well—lectures are duly attended—until upon a geological excursion the Princess falls into a whirling river, and is snatched from the brink of a cataract by her lover. The secret being thus discovered, the pretenders are expelled, in spite of a life saved. Then comes war between the kingdoms ; the Prince is struck senseless in the strife ; and as Ida, the Head of the College, moves round the sick-bed, where he lies hovering between life and death, a new light dawns upon her. She begins to feel that the gentle ministrations of home are a fitter study for her sex than the quadrature of the circle or the properties of amygdaloid. By degrees

'A closer interest flourished up,  
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,  
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears,  
By some cold morning glacier ; frail at first  
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,  
But such as gathered colour day by day.

'We never think of characterizing the poem by adjectives like "sublime" or "magnificent," for it pretends to no such qualities as these express. "Exquisite," "beautiful," "graceful," "tender," are rather the words we choose. A delicate playfulness runs through every page, like a golden thread through rich brocade. But with the sweet satiric touch there often mingles a tone of deep social wisdom, which exalts the poem far above mere prettiness. Some of the intervening lyrics are the perfection of lingual music, especially those lines descriptive of a bugle-note sounded amid the rocky shores of a lake.'



And yet again we must record the fact that as regards the hypercritical there was, and is, a vaguely hinted at 'something' which does not satisfy.

The year 1850 has been rightly called the 'great year' of Tennyson. It saw the publication of *In Memoriam*, which before December had run to a third edition. A third edition of *The Princess*, and a sixth of the *Poems*, were also published, while, to crown all, the poet was married to a lady who dwelt in the neighbourhood of his father's Rectory. Moreover, in this year he was made Laureate.

*In Memoriam* is a tribute to the memory of his lost friend, whose body was brought from Vienna to England, and laid in the chancel of Clevedon Church, in Somersetshire. It abounds in tender quatrains such as this :

I hold it true, whate'er befall ;  
I feel it when I sorrow most ;  
'Tis better to have loved and lost.  
Than never to have loved at all.

And these :

The Danube to the Severn gave  
The darkened heart that beats no more ;  
They laid him by the pleasant shore,  
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;  
The salt sea-water passes by,  
And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.

Tennyson's chief works in his official capacity as Poet-Laureate are his *Ode on the Death of Wellington* ; a poem *To the Queen*, which, dated March, 1851, now serves as a Dedication in the collective volume of his works ; lines to *H.R.H. Princess Beatrice* ; and a poem *On the Death of the Duke of Clarence and Avondale*.

*Maud* was published in 1855. Of all the poet's works, it is accounted 'the most piercingly dramatic, impassioned, and intensely yet delicately tender,' to quote the words of Mr. Shaw. At this time Tennyson was residing at his favourite residence of Farringford, in the Isle of Wight. From this favoured spot there issued also those inimitable lyrics, *Hands all Round*, in 1852 ; *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, in 1854 ; and *Riflemen, Form!* in 1859.

Mr. Shaw has furnished the student with the following most



helpful account of the various stages through which the 'whole Round Table' went, part by part, before it stood complete in its present form as *The Idylls of the King* :

'It now consists of twelve parts—*The Coming of Arthur* and *The Passing of Arthur* enclosing between them the ten other *Idylls of the King* that have at different times fallen into the scheme of "The Round Table." Of these twelve the last was the first to appear, in 1842, as the famous *Morte d'Arthur*. Next came, in 1859, and under the title of *Idylls of the King*, the third and fourth (first published as a simple Idyll, and called *Enid*) ; the sixth and seventh, called respectively *Vivien and Elaine* ; and the eleventh, *Guinevere*. In 1869 the first, eighth, and ninth—these two being *The Holy Grail* and *Palleas and Etarre*—were added, when, too, the last was given under its new name ; and then the scheme of the gathering poem was first revealed. The second and tenth—*Gareth and Lynette*, and *The Last Tournament*—joined the muster in 1872 ; and in 1885 the fifth, *Balin and Balan*, closed the list, so far as it has gone.'

Thus completed, it forms a magnificent epic, setting forth, as in few if any like efforts is it set forth, 'an image of the mighty world.' The poet and others have read an allegorical significance into it, telling us that 'by King Arthur the soul is meant, by the Round Table the passions and capacities of a man.' But the wisdom of this has been doubted by others, who, like Mr. Shaw himself, prefer to look upon it as 'an epic of humanity transported by the poet into an ideal world, starting enthusiastically towards the realization of high ideals, yet moving towards a very different destiny, towards the social ruin and dissolution that is the penalty of their own sin.'

Minor poems, which achieved a lasting popularity of their own, followed upon this great masterpiece. To mention all the poet's occasional and fugitive pieces, contributed to various journals, would require greater space than a general history can give. Between 1875 and 1884 six plays appeared—*Queen Mary*, *Harold*, *The Falcon*, *The Cup*, *The Promise of May*, and *Becket*. All these, with the exception of *Harold*, have been dramatized and produced on the London stage. *Becket* was a distinct success.

*Ballads and Other Poems* were published in 1880, *Teiresias and Other Poems* in 1885, *Locksley Hall* and *Sixty Years After*



in 1886, and *Demeter and Other Poems* in 1890. In his declining years he gave to the world a last instalment of the fruit of his still transcendent genius. In 1892 *The Foresters*, a pastoral drama in four acts, based on the story of Robin Hood, was produced simultaneously in London and New York. On the 6th of October in that year the world was saddened by the news that at Aldworth, his home at Haslemere, the soul of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, had passed to its rest. He lies in the Poets' Corner at Westminster, where he was laid with fitting honour by his sorrowing countrymen. By a striking, if mournful, coincidence, one of the most beautiful of his later poems was that perennial piece which he entitled *Crossing the Bar*, which runs as follows :

Sunset and evening star,  
And one clear call for me !  
And may there be no moaning of the bar  
When I put out to sea ;

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark !  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark ;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crost the bar.

It is perhaps too soon to say with any degree of certainty what place posterity will assign to Alfred Tennyson in the annals of English song. But we may fairly predict that his present well-won, and one might almost say well-fought-for, position in the very first rank will be long maintained. Perhaps he has not always written for all time, but he has done for his day and generation what few can be accredited with. He has touched and set to softest and sweetest music all the greatest topics of the time in which he lived. Society at its highest and lowest has been reached and influenced by the magic of his pen. He has portrayed in vivid and imperishable words the lives and characters of men and women better than has any poet since the days when Shakespeare wrote. Even the genius of Chaucer is reflected in his human pictures. As an exponent of the power



and beauty of the true idyll he has excelled all others. Like Browning, he is often complained of as difficult to understand. True, his pearls are sometimes in the depths, and the expert must search to find them. But the sound of his music is in the air, and the notes of his lyre are as pure and as soul-inspiring as any that have been produced in our day.

It has been stated more than once that Tennyson was not at all anxious to accept a peerage, and Miss Weld, in her excellent *Glimpses of Tennyson*, says that he laid a solemn charge upon her to 'let all the world know how great a sacrifice he had practised in yielding to Mr. Gladstone's pressing entreaties.' Tennyson resented the idea that he was to be treated as an artist in metre at the expense of his reputation as a teacher. He once said to Miss Weld that 'he felt that the gift of poetry was bestowed on him by his Heavenly Father as a great trust, that it might be a vehicle in which he was permitted to convey to his fellow-men the message that he had received from the Master.'

Charles Tennyson, who afterwards changed his name to Turner, on account of some inherited property, was himself a great poet 'in his own most sweet degree.' There is something specially gifted about his sonnets which have been the solace of more than one great mind. His greater brother loved to quote from them, as did also Samuel Taylor Coleridge and James Spedding, the critic, the poet's life-long friend. In the introduction to a volume of the collected sonnets, published after the death of Charles, Mr. Spedding quotes the passage which describes the dawn of a summer day :

But one sole star, none other anywhere ;  
A wild-rose odour from the fields was borne ;  
The lark's mysterious joy filled earth and air,  
And from the wind's top met the hunter's horn ;  
The aspen trembled wildly ; and the morn  
Breathed up in rosy clouds divinely fair.

The sons must have inherited their poetical gifts from their father, the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, LL.D., 'a tall, striking, and impressive man, full of accomplishments and parts, a strong nature, high-souled, high-tempered. He was the head of the old family ; but his own elder-brother share of its good things had passed by will into the hands of another branch, which is still represented by the Tennysons d'Eyncourt. Perhaps



before he died he may have realized that to one of his had come possessions greater than any ever yet entailed by lawyer's deeds—an inheritance, a priceless Benjamin's portion, not to be measured or defined.'

## IN MEMORIAM

## CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
     The flying cloud, the frosty light :  
     The year is dying in the night ;  
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
     Ring, happy bells, across the snow :  
     The year is going, let him go ;  
 Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
     For those that here we see no more ;  
     Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
 Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
     And ancient forms of party strife ;  
     Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
 With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
     The faithless coldness of the times ;  
     Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
 But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
     The civic slander and the spite ;  
     Ring in the love of truth and right,  
 Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;  
     Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;  
     Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
 Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
     The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;  
     Ring out the darkness of the land,  
 Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## THE THROSTLE

' Summer is coming, summer is coming,  
     I know it, I know it, I know it.  
 Light again, leaf again, life again, love again !'  
     Yes, my wild little poet.

Sing the New Year in under the blue ;  
     Last year you sang it so gladly.  
 ' New, new, new, new !' Is it, then, so new  
     That you carol so madly ?







Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,  
 Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the strand  
 Roar as the sea when he welcomes the land,  
 And welcome her, welcome the land's desire,  
 The sea-kings' daughter as happy as fair,  
 Blissful bride of a blissful heir,  
 Bride of the heir of the kings of the sea—  
 O joy to the people and joy to the throne,  
 Come to us, love us, and make us your own :  
 For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,  
 Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,  
 We are each all Dane in our welcome of thee,  
Alexandra !

### ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

*Circa 1809-1861*

'PLEASE to recollect,' wrote the subject of this memoir to a friend, 'that when I talk of women, I do not speak of them as many men do . . . according to a separate peculiar and womanly standard, but according to the common standard of human nature.' And the keynote of her marvellous personality is contained in these words. It is not as an intellectual woman merely, but as a great writer of perennial poetry, that history views the life and work of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Mrs. Browning was a native of London, and very early in life became a contributor to some of the leading journals of the day. In 1833 she published a translation of *Prometheus Bound*. This was the first work which was identified with her name. Two volumes of her poems were issued in 1844. In the year 1846 she became the wife of Robert Browning, the distinguished poet, after which her health began to fail, and she was obliged to go and live in Italy, first in Pisa, and eventually in Florence. The woes of her adopted country appealed very strongly to the tender heart of the poetess, and in 1851 she published a poem called *Casa Guidi Windows*.

The greatest of Mrs. Browning's poems is *Aurora Leigh*, which appeared in 1856. It is a work of transcendent genius, 'in which the most gifted woman of the Victorian era places on record the aspirations of the awakening womanhood of the Nineteenth Century.' *Poems before Congress* were published shortly before her death, which took place at the Casa Guidi, Florence, on the 29th of June, 1861.



Critics are almost unanimous in giving to this poetess the very first place on the list of female writers of verse. In fact, it has long been decided that she is beyond question the greatest poetess that any age or country has produced. We may go a step further, and say with Edgar Allan Poe, one of her greatest admirers, that we have a conviction 'not idly entertained, nor founded on any visionary basis, that she surpassed all her poetical contemporaries of either sex, with a single exception.'

Had Mrs. Browning bequeathed us nothing but that exquisite poem *The Cry of the Children*, which we subjoin, she would have established an undying claim to the gratitude of the world. Mr. Stead tells us rightly that 'it is versified Blue-Book, no doubt, but it is a poem which, wrung from the heart, goes to the heart, and will never cease to be a power making for righteousness so long as the English language is spoken on the earth. At this moment it nerves the heart of the forlorn and struggling remnant who, in many American States, are endeavouring to rescue the children from the Inferno to which they are at present too often doomed in the name of the sacred principle of the sanctity of contract. It helps all those who in this country have just rescued the new Factory Bill from the wreck of the legislation of the late Parliament. When it was published it was the most effective answer to the protest of Mr. Bright and others of the Manchester School against the Factory Acts, and it remains to this day the most eloquent and the most pathetic plea for the little ones that the world has ever heard.'

*Lady Geraldine's Courtship* was published in 1844. It is an exquisite piece of work, somewhat suggestive of Tennyson's *Locksley Hall*. It is said to have been begun and finished in a twelve hours' sitting. Mr. Peter Bayne says '*Lady Geraldine's Courtship* is steeped in melody—the language, the imagery, the sentiment, the thought, all instinct with music, floating and flowing and rippling along in an element of liquid harmony and modulated brilliance. The finest wine of her genius, the intensest elixir of her poetic sympathy, the very essence of her womanly pride, and not less of her womanly ecstasy of self-surrendering humility, as well as of her most original imagery, puissant thought, and splendid language, are present in this poem of "the right divine of love to set its foot on the neck of pride."'



The imaginative or creative faculty stands pre-eminently forward in the writings of this singularly gifted woman. Her *Satan* in the *Drama of Exile* is acknowledged by eminent critics to be one of the finest creations in the whole range of literature. Yet her writings are not absolutely without fault. In her flights of wild ambition she sometimes soars to an atmosphere which she seems to breathe with difficulty, as though now and then she were actually gasping for breath. And so some of her work shows a lack of finish which is all the more striking by contrast with what she has done perfectly. It is rugged, and sometimes quite devoid of rhythm. Even some stanzas in *Aurora Leigh* might be taken for prose as easily as for poetry. But this is hypercriticism.

There is a suggestion of egoism in the poetry of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and she herself would have been the last person to deny the fact. The secret of this circumstance lies in the soulfulness of her work. To her life was poetry, and poetry was life. 'Poetry has been as serious a thing to me,' she writes, 'as life itself; and life has been a very serious thing. I never mistook pleasure for the final cause of poetry, nor leisure for the hour of the poet.' She viewed her art as second only to the dominant feeling which should inspire all art—the feeling of love.

Art is much, but Love is more ;  
O Art, my Art, thou'rt much, but Love is more.  
Art symbolizes heaven, but Love is God  
And makes heaven.

#### THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN

*The Cry of the Children* appeared originally in *Blackwood's Magazine* in August, 1843. Mr. Horne, who had been appointed by the Government an Assistant Commissioner to the Commission appointed to inquire into the Employment of Children in Mines and Manufactories, wrote a Report, which Mrs. Browning (then Miss Elizabeth Barrett) read. To that circumstance we owe this poem—a masterpiece, 'full of a nervous, unflinching energy—a horror sublime in its simplicity—of which Dante himself might have been proud.' Here the mother-soul in the woman, as yet unwedded, found for the first time its full prophetic utterance.

φεῖ, φεῖ, τι προσδερχεσθε μ' ὀμμασιν, τέχνα.—MEDEA.

#### I

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,  
Ere the sorrow comes with years ?  
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,—  
And *that* cannot stop their tears.



The young lambs are bleating in the meadows ;  
 The young birds are chirping in the nest ;  
 The young fawns are playing with the shadows ;  
 The young flowers are blowing toward the west—  
 But the young, young children, O my brothers,  
     They are weeping bitterly !—  
 They are weeping in the playtime of the others,  
     In the country of the free.

## II

Do you question the young children in the sorrow,  
     Why their tears are falling so ?—  
 The old man may weep for his to-morrow  
     Which is lost in Long Ago—  
 The old tree is leafless in the forest—  
     The old year is ending in the frost—  
 The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest—  
     The old hope is hardest to be lost :  
 But the young, young children, O my brothers,  
     Do you ask them why they stand  
 Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,  
     In our happy Fatherland ?

## III

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,  
     And their looks are sad to see,  
 For the man's grief abhorrent, draws and presses  
     Down the cheeks of infancy—  
 ' Your old earth,' they say, ' is very dreary ;'  
 ' Our young feet,' they say, ' are very weak !  
 Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—  
     Our grave-rest is very far to seek.  
 Ask the old why they weep, and not the children  
     For the outside earth is cold,—  
 And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,  
     And the graves are for the old.

## IV

' True,' say the young children, ' it may happen  
     That we die before our time.  
 Little Alice died last year—the grave is shapen  
     Like a snowball, in the rime.  
 We looked into the pit prepared to take her—  
     Was no room for any work in the close clay :  
 From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,  
     Crying, " Get up, little Alice ! it is day."  
 If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,  
     With your ear down, little Alice never cries !—  
 Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,  
     For the smile has time for growing in her eyes,—  
 And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in  
     The shroud, by the kirk-chime !  
 It is good when it happens,' say the children,  
     ' That we die before our time.'



## V

Alas, alas, the children ! they are seeking  
 Death in life, as best to have !  
 They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,  
     With a cerement from the grave.  
 Go out, children, from the mine and from the city—  
     Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do—  
 Pluck your handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty—  
     Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through !  
 But they answer, ' Are your cowslips of the meadows  
     Like our weeds anear the mine ?  
 Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,  
     From your pleasures fair and fine !

## VI

' For oh,' say the children, ' we are weary,  
     And we cannot run or leap—  
 If we cared for any meadows, it were merely  
     To drop down in them and sleep.  
 Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping—  
     We fall upon our faces, trying to go ;  
 And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,  
     The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.  
 For, all day, we drag our burden tiring,  
     Through the coal-dark, underground—  
 Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron  
     In the factories, round and round.

## VII

' For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning,—  
     Their wind comes in our faces,—  
 Till our hearts turn,—our head, with pulses burning,  
     And the walls turn in their places—  
 Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling ;  
     Turns the long light that droppeth down the wall ;  
 Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling—  
     All are turning, all the day, and we with all.  
 And, all day, the iron wheels are droning ;  
     And sometimes we could pray,  
 " O ye wheels "—breaking out in a mad moaning—  
     " Stop ! be silent for to-day ! "

## VIII

Ay ! be silent ! Let them hear each other breathing  
     For a moment, mouth to mouth—  
 Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing  
     Of their tender human youth !  
 Let them feel that this cold metallic motion  
     Is not all the life God fashions or reveals—  
 Let them prove their inward souls against the notion  
     That they live in you, or under you, O wheels !  
 Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,  
     Grinding life down from its mark ;  
 And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward,  
     Spin on blindly in the dark.



## IX

Now, tell the poor young children, O my brothers,  
     To look up to Him and pray—  
 So the blessed One, who blesseth all the others,  
     Will bless them another day.  
 They answer, ' Who is God that He should hear us  
     While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred ?  
 When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us  
     Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word !  
 And we hear not—for the wheels in their resounding—  
     Strangers speaking at the door :  
 Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him,  
     Hears our weeping any more ?

## X

' Two words, indeed, of praying we remember ;  
     And at midnight's hour of harm,—  
 " Our Father," looking upward in the chamber,  
     We say softly for a charm.  
 We know no other words except " Our Father,"  
     And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,  
 God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,  
     And hold both within His right hand which is strong,  
 " Our Father ! " If He heard us, He would surely  
     (For they call Him good and mild)  
 Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,  
     " Come and rest with Me, My child."

## XI

' But no ! ' say the children, weeping faster,  
     ' He is speechless as a stone ;  
 And they tell us, of His image is the master  
     Who commands us to work on.  
 Go to ! ' say the children,—' Up in Heaven,  
     Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.  
 Do not mock us ; grief has made us unbelieving—  
     We look up for God, but tears have made us blind.'  
 Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,  
     O my brothers, what ye preach ?  
 For God's possible is taught by His world's loving—  
     And the children doubt of each.

## XII

And well may the children weep before you ;  
     They are weary ere they run ;  
 They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory  
     Which is brighter than the sun :  
 They know the grief of man, but not the wisdom  
     They sink in man's despair, without its calm—  
 Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,—  
     Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm,—  
 Are worn, as if with age, yet unretrievably  
     No dear remembrance keep,—  
 Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly :  
     Let them weep ! let them weep !



## XIII

They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,  
 And their look is dread to see,  
 For they mind you of their angels in their places,  
 With eyes meant for Deity :—  
 'How long,' they say, 'how long, O cruel nation,  
 Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart,—  
 Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitant,  
 And tread onward to your throne amid the mart ?  
 Our blood splashes upward, O our tyrants,  
 And your purple shows your path ;  
 But the child's sob curseth deeper in the silence  
 Than the strong man in his wrath !'

## LOVE SONNETS TO ROBERT BROWNING

A selection from forty-three sonnets written before her marriage to the great poet, telling the story of their love. The poetess had been ill, and almost at death's door, when Robert Browning 'wooed her and won her back to life.'

## I

I thought once how Theocritus had sung  
 Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,  
 Who each one in a gracious hand appears  
 To bear a gift for mortals, old or young :  
 And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,  
 I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,  
 The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,  
 Those of my own life, who by turns had flung  
 A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,  
 So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move  
 Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair ;  
 And a voice said in mastery while I strove, . . .  
 'Guess now who holds thee ?'—'Death !' I said. But, there,  
 The silver answer rang, . . . 'Not Death, but Love.'

## II

But only three in all God's universe  
 Have heard this word thou hast said ; Himself, beside  
 Thee speaking and me listening ! and replied  
 One of us . . . *that* was God ! . . . and laid the curse  
 So darkly on my eyelids as to amerce  
 My sight from seeing thee,—that if I had died,  
 The deathweights, placed there, would have signified  
 Less absolute exclusion. 'Nay' is worse  
 From God than from all others, O my friend !  
 Men could not part us with their worldly jars,  
 Nor the seas change us, nor the tempests bend ;  
 Our hands would touch, for all the mountain-bars ;—  
 And, heaven being rolled between us at the end,  
 We should but vow the faster for the stars.



## III

Unlike are we, unlike, O princely Heart !  
 Unlike our uses, and our destinies.  
 Our ministering two angels look surprise  
 On one another, as they strike athwart  
 Their wings in passing. Thou, bethink thee, art  
 A guest for queens to social pageantries,  
 With gages from a hundred brighter eyes  
 Than tears, even, can make mine, to ply thy part  
 Of chief musician. What hast *thou* to do  
 With looking from the lattice-lights at me,  
 A poor, tired, wandering singer ? . . . singing through  
 The dark, and leaning up a cypress tree ?  
 The chrim is on thine head,—on mine, the dew,—  
 And Death must dig the level where these agree.

## A CHILD ASLEEP

## I

How he sleepeth ! having drunken  
 Weary childhood's mandragore,  
 From his pretty eyes have sunken  
 Pleasures, to make room for more—  
 Sleeping near the withered nosegay, which he pulled the day before.

## II

Nosegays ! leave them for the waking :  
 Throw them earthward where they grew.  
 Dim are such, beside the breaking  
 Amaranths he looks unto—  
 Folded eyes see brighter colours than the open ever do.

## III

Heaven-flowers, rayed by shadows golden  
 From the paths they sprang beneath,  
 Now perhaps divinely holden,  
 Swing against him in a wreath—  
 We may think so from the quickening of his bloom and of his breath.

## IV

Vision unto vision calleth,  
 While the young child dreameth on.  
 Fair, O dreamer, thee befalleth  
 With the glory thou hast won !  
 Darker wert thou in the garden, yestermorn, by summer sun.

## V

We should see the spirits ringing  
 Round thee,—were the clouds away.  
 'Tis the child-heart draws them, singing,  
 In the silent-seeming clay—  
 Singing !—Stars that seem the mutest, go in music all the way.



## VI

As the moths around a taper,  
 As the bees around a rose,  
 As the gnats around a vapour,—  
 So the Spirits group and close  
 Round about a holy childhood, as if drinking its repose.

## VII

Shapes of brightness overlean thee,—  
 Flash their diadems of youth  
 On the ringlets which half screen thee,—  
 While thou smilest, . . . not in sooth  
*Thy* smile . . . but the overfair one, dropt from some æthereal mouth.

## VIII

Haply it is angels' duty,  
 During slumber, shade by shade  
 To fine down this childish beauty  
 To the thing it must be made,  
 Ere the world shall bring it praises, or the tomb shall see it fade.

## IX

Softly, softly ! make no noises !  
 Now he lieth dead and dumb—  
 Now he hears the angels' voices  
 Folding silence in the room—  
 Now he muses deep the meaning of the Heaven-words as they come.

## X

Speak not ! he is consecrated—  
 Breathe no breath across his eyes.  
 Lifted up and separated,  
 On the hand of God he lies,  
 In a sweetness beyond touching,—held in cloistral sanctities.

## XI

Could ye bless him—father—mother ?  
 Bless the dimple in his cheek ?  
 Dare ye look at one another,  
 And the benediction speak ?  
 Would ye not break out in weeping, and confess yourselves too weak ?

## XII

He is harmless—ye are sinful,—  
 Ye are troubled—he, at ease :  
 From his slumber, virtue winful  
 Floweth outward with increase—  
 Dare not bless him ! but be blessed by his peace—and go in peace.



## ROBERT BROWNING

1812-1889

ROBERT BROWNING takes a very high rank amongst the poets of the Victorian era. He is described by Mr. Shaw as 'the most singular of our master poets,' and as being 'held by his admirers the profoundest interpreter of this modern age.'

Mr. Stopford Brooke tells us that 'Keats marks the exhaustion of the impulse which began with Burns and Cowper. There was no longer now in England any large wave of public thought or feeling such as could awaken poetry.' He speaks of the poetry of that age as 'a number of pretty little poems having no inward fire, no idea, no marked character. They might have been written by any versifier at any time.' The poems of Mrs. Hemans, those of L. E. L., and even the earlier efforts of Alfred Tennyson, he places at this meagre valuation. The date of which he speaks is 1830. But a new tribe of singers came with the Oxford Movement and the new Reform agitation. A series of novel elements was noticeable in their verse. Social and political questions, theology, scepticism, metaphysics, and the analysis of human character, all were to be found in it. Robert Browning was one of these.

This remarkable poet was born at Camberwell in the year 1812. His father was a clerk in the Bank of England. He attended school at Peckham, and afterwards attended lectures at University College, London. Beyond this he seems to have had no systematic educational training. But he doubtless learned a great deal from his father, who was himself a man of considerable genius, who could count poetry and art amongst his various scholarly attainments. The Browning family came from the South-West of England. The poet's mother was of Scottish origin, and her father was a German, a native of Hamburg. Robert's paternal grandmother was a Creole from the West Indies. This intermingling of many nationalities in the blood of one man of transcendent genius may be in a great measure accountable for the cosmopolitan characteristics which are so strongly marked in the man and in his works. Some of his finest inspirations are said to have come to him as he roamed in the woods at Dulwich.



He was brought up amongst the 'Independents,' to which Nonconformist body his father and mother belonged, and his education from earliest childhood was subject to religious influences. He went with his parents to worship, in his childhood, at York Street Independent Chapel, Walworth, now called the Robert Browning Hall, and the meeting-place of a social settlement.<sup>1</sup> His father was quick to discern the early indications of genius which marked his son as superior to the average schoolboy, and fostered them with a firm though gentle hand. Robert was greatly drawn to the study of poetry, and felt the influence of such works as those of Keats and Shelley, which were amongst his favourites. He was allowed to choose his own profession, and he chose to be a poet. As this has never been at the best of times a lucrative calling, it was fortunate for him that from the first he was endowed with private means.

At the age of twenty Browning produced his first volume of poetry. The name of the work is *Pauline*, a powerful but somewhat lengthy monologue in blank verse. It caused no stir of any kind, but was speedily forgotten by the very small 'public' whose attention it attracted. For two years afterwards Browning travelled a great deal, chiefly in Italy and Russia, and in Asolo his name and fame are greatly cherished. In 1835, on his return to England, he published his dramatic poem *Paracelsus*. It differs in style from his earlier work, not being a monologue. It went a long way towards establishing his fame as a poet, and had the direct result of obtaining for its author a number of friends of literary eminence, a circumstance which is always of value to a young and ambitious writer. Macready, the great actor, was one of his new admirers, and asked him to write a play. In response to this request he produced *Strafford*, a piece which was acted at Covent Garden Theatre with considerable success, and published in 1837. In 1841 he produced *Sordello*, written, as the author explains, 'for only a few.' During the next six years, under the general title of *Bells and Pomegranates*, there appeared a series of works, embracing *Pippa Passes*, *King Victor and King Charles*, *The Return of the Druses*,

<sup>1</sup> It may be noted as a strange coincidence that both Milton and Browning, 'the two most virile poets of English literature,' belonged to the Independents.



*A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, *Colombe's Birthday*, *Dramatic Romances*, and, in the last volume, *Luria* and *A Soul's Tragedy*.

Of all the poems of Browning, none is more widely known, or more generally popular, than *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, which appeared in a collection called *Dramatic Lyrics* in 1842. It finds a place in every collection of poetry compiled for histrionic amateurs, and is being constantly translated into new languages. Next in favour for public recitation may be placed the dramatic romance, *How we brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix*.

In 1850 *Christmas Eve and Easter Day* appeared. It is a sermon in verse, and has the broad subject of Christianity as its theme.

Browning married Elizabeth Barrett, who herself fills a high place in the history of English literature. This happy event took place in 1846. Their married life extended over fifteen years, which were passed in Italy, occasional visits being paid to England. During this period Browning did not write much, but his collection of shorter poems, entitled *Men and Women*, takes rank amongst his best work. *The Ring and the Book* appeared in 1869. For the remaining years of his life the poet was sufficiently diligent to make up for his long period of comparative restfulness. Amongst the fourteen volumes which added lustre to his name may be mentioned *Fifine at the Fair* (1872), *The Inn Album* (1875), *Parleyings with Certain People* (1887), *Balaustion's Adventure* (1871), *Aristophanes' Apology* (1875), *Pacchiarotto* (1876), *Agamemnon* (1877), and *The Two Poets of Croisic* (1878).

Browning died on the 12th of December, 1889, in Venice, and on the same day his last work, *Asolando*, was published in London. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, no poet having been so honoured since Gay had been laid to rest there in 1732.

A modern writer wittily refers to the place which this poet now occupies in contemporary thought in the following terms :

'Robert Browning has been too long the prey of the "superior person." His poetry has been seized upon as the private preserve of the esoteric few. The total originality of his style, his swift transitions of thought, the unfamiliar scenes and persons of many of his pieces, and above all his profound and subtle analysis of soul, have been thrust forward as a fence to ward off the uninitiated multitude. Most unnecessary emphasis has been



laid on what is abstruse and recondite in his writings, and the Pharisees of culture have all but publicly thanked God that they were not as other men, or even as this poor Philistine who "could not understand Browning." The Philistine retaliated by declaring that he had no desire to understand a poet so occult, and it became the fashion to vent small witticisms at Browning's "obscurity." Happily there have been from the first those who found in his writings the very light of life.'

Browning is essentially an intellectual poet, but his writings abound in all the elements of imagination and passion. He has proved himself a skilful and soulful delineator of the characters of men and women. With their virtues and their failings he is alike intimately acquainted, and he paints his pictures of nature with a master-hand. He has been truly described as one who embodies more than any other poet the genius of the English people in the Victorian era. He sets before himself at every turn the pressing question, What is the aim and the explanation of human life? And he has answered it. Here and there his way of answering calls for more careful, and even for more serious thought than is required for the understanding of the more commonplace of his fellows, but the interpretation of the matter is not always far to find. Though there are preserves which serve to occupy the deeper learnedness of the 'esoteric few,' yet there are simpler passages in abundance which he who runs may read.

The study of Browning's poetry is engrossing the attention of some of the most eminent of modern critics. Some idea of the scope which it offers may be gathered from a mere statement of the fact that Mr. Stopford Brooke has recently published a most learned and exhaustive treatise on the subject which is divided into eighteen chapters, each of which deals completely with the poet in a special phase. 'Parnassus, Apollo's Mount, has two peaks, and on these, for sixty years, from 1830 to 1890, two poets sat till their right to these lofty peaks became unchallenged.' Thus he begins. It is a book that will lead to much criticism and even difference of opinion, but it will increase the popularity of Browning, who has not reached his zenith as yet. 'He is, no doubt, an acquired taste, but once acquired, that taste is invincible. There is one reason why we think his pages will be devoured when poets more popular at present have



been completely left aside. He is more the poet of the spirit of the times. He is never namby-pamby; there is nothing in him about cousin Amy; no milk-and-water invitations to super-susceptible Mauds; nothing that is not strenuous, solemn, suggestive, that does not go to the depths of life and feeling and emotion; nothing that has been written for the sake of writing merely; nothing solely dictated by the artist to the man. He writes because there is something vital to write about, because he feels a problem and has a solution worth stating.'

These last are the words of an anonymous critic writing on the subject of Mr. Brooke's new work. We trust we may be pardoned for quoting the following powerful passage from that book itself, than which there could be no better *vade-mecum* for the serious student of the great poet's utterances.

'The first thing that meets us,' says our author very justly, 'and in his very first poems, is his special view of human nature and of human life, and of the relation of both to God. It marks his originality that this view was entirely his own. Ancient thoughts of course are to be found in it, but his combination of them is original amongst the English poets. It marks his genius that he wrought out this conception while he was yet so young. It is partly shaped in *Pauline*, it is freely set forth in *Paracelsus*, and it marks his consistence of mind that he never changed it. I do not think he ever added to it or developed it. It satisfied him when he was a youth and when he was an old man. That theory needs to be outlined till it is understood. Browning's poetry cannot be understood or loved as fully as we should desire to love it. It exists in *Pauline*, but all its elements are in solution, uncombined, but waiting the electric flash which will mix them in due proportion into a composite substance, having a living form and capable of being used. That flash was sent through the confused elements of *Pauline*, and the result was *Paracelsus*. . . . The foundation of Browning's theory is a kind of original sin in us, a natural defectiveness deliberately imposed on us by God, which prevents us attaining any absolute success on earth. And the defectiveness of nature is met by the truth, which, while we aspire, we know, that God will fulfil all noble desire in a life to come. We must aspire then, but at the same time all aspiring is to be conterminous with steady work within our limits. Aspiration to the



perfect is not to make us idle, indifferent to the present, but to drive us on. Its fusion teaches us, as it urges into action all our power, what we can and what we cannot do. That is, it teaches us through the action it engenders what our limits are, and when we know them the main duties of life rise clear.'

Attention is also justly called by this and other eminent critics to Browning's expansive treatment of Nature. It is not in a moment that one realizes how familiar—nay, intimate—he was with her in all her varying moods, and the many complex and mysterious phenomena which environ man. 'The morning and the night, the darkness and the light, the sea and the landscape, the placid lagoon, the sedgy swamp, the chirping bird, the wild tulip, the corals, the red fans of the butterfly, the serenity and glowing comfort of summer, the fierceness of the Italian thunderstorm,'—his poems scintillate with references to these and countless other natural and beauteous features in the face of that Nature which he loved to depict and enlarge upon.

In this age of scepticism it is remarkable that our two unquestionably most eminent poets, Tennyson and Browning, are on the side of *faith*, and, moreover, of the Christian faith, though claiming the liberty to interpret the articles of that faith for themselves. In *Saul* Browning says :

'Tis not what man does that exalts him,  
But what man would do.

He insists upon this doctrine pertinaciously. In his works we look in vain for any note of despair ; on the contrary, he imbues us with the conviction that to him at least everything is 'worth while.' He 'preaches energy as our life-task, doing our chosen work with all our might ; he tells us to pierce below custom and convention, and lay hold of what is true, satisfying, and abiding in our spirits ; yea, even when we fail in the eyes of the world he assures us that we may trust God, the Father of our spirits, to perfect the good honest work we have begun, in His own best manner, and to renew our youth like the eagles', if not here, then hereafter. Shockingly unscientific ! Still, unless I completely misunderstand him, so Browning believes.'

Speaking of the difficulty which some minds encounter in



their efforts to thoroughly understand Browning, Mr. Roden Noel, whose able article in the *Contemporary Review* we have quoted in the last paragraph, goes on to say :

'The obscurity complained of comes sometimes from the monologue method, for the one person who is alone before the reader is talking at, questioning, and replying to other interlocutors, whom the author has in his mind, but the reader only guesses at; and what they are supposed to say the reader must divine from the only words he has before him. Enough of all this, however. It needs pointing out, if you wish to do as Matthew Arnold bids you, estimate your classic fairly, and recognise where he comes short, only in order that you may the more fully and intelligibly appreciate what is truly admirable in him and others. For let me say distinctly, with whatever abatements, Browning is a great English writer to whom we are very deeply indebted. A fissured volcano rolls you out ashes, stones, and smoke, along with its flame and burning lava. And he who never descends into the depths shall never ascend into the heights. A dapper dandy, with little mind and little heart, but perfect self-possession—there is not very much of him to possess—hands you his neat little gift well polished, say, a new silk hat nicely brushed. An uncouth great man, with big mind and big heart, possesses himself not so thoroughly—there is more of him to possess—and he presents you with *his* gift, say, a huge vase of gems; but the vase may have a flaw in it, and what then? One can only pity the fastidious person with the weak digestion, whose gorge so rises at some trivial fault, as he deems it, in the cookery which he cannot enjoy, and be nourished by good wholesome food when it is offered. Perhaps, because it lacks olives or truffles, he is for throwing it all away. And as Mr. Browning's style is sometimes perfectly clear, full of Saxon force and dignity, his lines and phrases here and there memorable for their strong, incisive felicity, seldom, though now and then, even for delicate grace, so his metres are frequently original, appropriate, vigorous, and perfectly germane to the sense.'

Striking words, too, are those of Edmund Gosse in *Robert Browning: Personalia* :

'Long as he lived, he did not live long enough for one of his ideals to vanish, for one of his enthusiasms to lose its heat; to the last, as he so truly said, he never doubted clouds would



break, never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph ! The subtlest of writers, he was the simplest of men, and he learned in serenity what he taught in song.'

'In the case of what is called Browning's obscurity,' says Mr. G. K. Chesterton in the *English Men of Letters* series, 'the question is somewhat (more) difficult to handle. Many people have supposed Browning to be profound because he was obscure, and many other people, hardly less mistaken, have supposed him to be obscure because he was profound. He was frequently profound, he was occasionally obscure, but as a matter of fact the two have little or nothing to do with each other. Browning's dark and elliptical mode of speech, like his love of the grotesque, was simply a characteristic of his, a trick of his temperament, and had little or nothing to do with whether what he was expressing was profound or superficial.' The same writer instances the following example of Browning's style as one which might easily puzzle even one well read in English poetry :

Hobbs hints blue—straight he turtle eats.  
Nobbs prints blue—claret crowns his cup.  
Nokes outdares Stokes in azure feats—  
Both gorge. Who fished the murex up ?  
What porridge had John Keats ?

He contends that the person confronted with this quotation would say without hesitation that it must indeed be an abstruse, and indescribable thought which could only be conveyed by remarks so completely disconnected. But he considers that the point of the matter is that the thought contained in this amazing verse is not abstruse or philosophical at all, but is 'a perfectly ordinary and straightforward comment,' which might have been made by anyone on an obvious fact of life. 'The whole verse begins to explain itself if we know the meaning of the word *murex*, which is the name of a sea-shell, out of which was made the celebrated blue dye of Tyre. The poet takes this blue dye as a simile for a new style in literature, and points out that Hobbs, Nobbs, etc., obtain fame and comfort by merely using the dye from the shell, and adds the perfectly natural comment :

... Who fished the murex up ?  
What porridge had John Keats ?

True, the connection between porridge and blue dye may not be apparent to the average reader, or even the average



critic, but to Mr. Chesterton 'the verse is not subtle, and was not meant to be subtle, but is a perfectly casual piece of sentiment at the end of a light poem,' and he assures us that Browning is not obscure because he has such deep things to say, any more than he is grotesque because he has such new things to say. He is both of these things primarily because he likes to express himself in a particular manner.

As is pointed out by Dr. Dowden in his recent work on Browning, contributed to the *Temple Biographies* (a work, by the way, which no student of the poet's works should be without), to attempt at the present time to determine the place of this great writer in the history of English poetry is perhaps premature. Yet perhaps no critic has come nearer than Dr. Dowden to a just and even adequate estimate of Browning's many virtues and individualities. He does something more than hint that his place will be second only to that of Tennyson amongst the poets of the Victorian era. He reminds us that Browning as a poet 'had his origins in the romantic school of English poetry ; but he came at a time when the romance of external action and adventure had exhausted itself, and when it became necessary to carry romance into the inner world, where the adventures are those of the soul.' Dealing with the optimism which characterizes the poet's 'curious inquisition of the phenomena of the world of mind,' the learned critic goes on to say :

'Being a complete and a sane human creature, Browning could not rest content with the vicious asceticism of the intellect which calls itself scientific because it refuses to recognise any facts which are not material and tangible. Science itself, in the true sense of the word, exists and progresses by ventures of imaginative faith. And in all matters which involve good and evil, hopes and fears, in all matters which determine the conduct of life, no rational person excludes from his view the postulates of our moral nature, or should exclude the final option of the will. The person whose beliefs are determined by material facts alone and by the understanding unallied with our other powers is the irrational and unscientific person. Being a complete and sane human creature, Browning was assured that the visible order of things is part of a larger order, the existence of which alone makes human life intelligible to the reason.' And again : 'Browning's optimism has been erroneously ascribed to his temperament. He declared that in



his personal experience the pain of life outweighed its pleasure. His optimism was part of the vigorous sanity of his moral nature : like a reasonable man, he made the happiness which he did not find. If any person should censure the process of giving objective validity to a moral postulate, he has only to imagine some extra-human intelligence making a study of human nature ; to such an intelligence our moral postulates would be objective facts and have the value of objective evidence. That whole of which our life on earth forms a part could not be conceived by Browning without also being conceived as good.'

Browning is universally acknowledged to be essentially the poet of poets and of thinkers. His individuality is his chief charm, though the complete analysis of that individuality be not yet written. It has been suggested by a recent critic that his apparent obscurity is not merely a matter of style and expression, and further, that this may be proved by simply trying, after mastering the poet's meaning in a difficult passage, to express the thoughts it contains in clearer and simpler English, when it will be found that the words used by the poet himself are the very clearest possible to convey the meaning. 'The real difficulty lies in gaining the poet's standpoint ; that done, all is simple ; and this difficulty arises mainly from the subtlety and rapidity of his thoughts.' From which it is obvious that to many an intellect even above the average the mind of Browning must continue to be as a sealed book.

#### THE BOY AND THE ANGEL

Morning, evening, noon, and night,  
 'Praise God !' sang Theocrite.  
 Then to his poor trade he turned,  
 By which the daily meal was earned.  
 Hard he laboured, long and well ;  
 O'er his work the boy's curls fell.  
 But ever, at each period,  
 He stopped and sang, 'Praise God !'  
 Then back again his curls he threw,  
 And cheerful turned to work anew.  
 Said Blaise, the listening monk, 'Well done ;  
 I doubt not thou art heard, my son :  
 'As well as if thy voice to-day  
 Were praising God, the Pope's great way.  
 'This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome  
 Praises God from Peter's dome.'



Said Theocrite, ' Would God that I  
Might praise Him, that great way, and die !'  
Night passed, day shone,  
And Theocrite was gone.

With God a day endures alway,  
A thousand years are but a day.

God said in heaven, ' Nor day nor night  
Now brings the voice of My delight.'

Then Gabriel, like a rainbow's birth,  
Spread his wings and sank to earth ;

Entered, in flesh, the empty cell,  
Lived there, and played the craftsman well ;  
And morning, evening, noon, and night,  
Praised God in place of Theocrite.

And from a boy, to youth he grew :  
The man put off the stripling's hue :

The man matured and fell away  
Into the season of decay ;

And ever o'er the trade he bent,  
And ever lived on earth content.

(He did God's will ; to him, all one  
If on the earth or in the sun.)

God said, ' A praise is in Mine ear ;  
There is no doubt in it, no fear :

' So sing old worlds, and so  
New worlds that from My footstool go.

' Clearer loves sound other ways :  
I miss My little human praise.'

Then forth sprang Gabriel's wings, off fell  
The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

'Twas Easter Day : he flew to Rome,  
And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

In the tiring-room close by  
The great outer gallery,

With his holy vestments dight,  
Stood the new Pope, Theocrite

And all his past career  
Came back upon him clear,

Since when, a boy, he plied his trade,  
Till on his life the sickness weighed ;

And in his cell, when death drew near,  
An angel in a dream brought cheer :

And rising from the sickness drear  
He grew a priest, and now stood here.

To the East with praise he turned,  
And on his sight the angel burned.

' I bore thee from thy craftsman's cell  
And set thee here ; I did not well.

' Vainly I left my angel-sphere,  
Vain was thy dream of many a year.



## A HISTORY OF BRITISH POETRY

'Thy voice's praise seemed weak ; it dropped—  
Creation's chorus stopped !

'Go back and praise again  
The early way, while I remain.

'With that weak voice of our disdain,  
Take up creation's pausing strain.

'Back to the cell and poor employ :  
Become the craftsman and the boy !'

Theocrite grew old at home ;  
A new Pope dwelt in Peter's dome.

One vanished as the other died :  
They sought God side by side.

## THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

## A CHILD'S STORY

(WRITTEN FOR, AND INSCRIBED TO, W. M.<sup>1</sup> THE YOUNGER)

## I

Hamelin Town's in Brunswick,  
By famous Hanover city ;  
The river Weser, deep and wide,  
Washes its walls on the southern side ;  
A pleasanter spot you never spied ;  
But, when begins my ditty,  
Almost five hundred years ago,  
To see the townsfolk suffer so  
From vermin, was a pity.

## II

Rats !  
They fought the dogs and killed the cats,  
And bit the babies in the cradles,  
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,  
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,  
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,  
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,  
And even spoiled the women's chats  
By drowning their speaking  
With shrieking and squeaking  
In fifty different sharps and flats.

## III

At last the people in a body  
To the Town Hall came flocking :  
'Tis clear,' cried they, 'our Mayor's a noddy ;  
'And as for our Corporation—shocking  
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine  
For dolts that can't or won't determine  
What's best to rid us of our vermin !  
You hope, because you're old and obese,  
To find in the furry civic robe ease ?

<sup>1</sup> William Macready, son of the actor. The story is based on an old German legend.



Rouse up, sirs ! Give your brains a racking  
 To find the remedy we're lacking,  
 Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing !'  
 At this the Mayor and Corporation  
 Quaked with a mighty consternation.

## IV

An hour they sate in council,  
 At length the Mayor broke silence :  
 ' For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell,  
 I wish I were a mile hence !  
 It's easy to bid one rack one's brain—  
 I'm sure my poor head aches again,  
 I've scratched it so, and all in vain.  
 Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap !'  
 Just as he said this, what should hap  
 At the chamber door but a gentle tap !  
 ' Bless us,' cried the Mayor, ' what's that ?'  
 (With the Corporation as he sat,  
 Looking little though wondrous fat ;  
 Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister  
 Than a too-long-opened oyster,  
 Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous  
 For a plate of turtle green and glutinous)  
 ' Only a scraping of shoes on the mat ?  
 Anything like the sound of a rat  
 Makes my heart go pit-a-pat !'

## V

' Come in !'—the Mayor cried, looking bigger :  
 And in did come the strangest figure !  
 His queer long coat from heel to head  
 Was half of yellow and half of red,  
 And he himself was tall and thin,  
 With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,  
 And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,  
 No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,  
 But lips where smiles went out and in ;  
 There was no guessing his kith and kin ;  
 And nobody could enough admire  
 The tall man and his quaint attire.  
 Quoth one : ' It's as my great grandsire,  
 Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,  
 Had walked this way from his painted tomb-stone !'

## VI

He advanced to the council-table :  
 And, ' Please your honours,' said he, ' I'm able,  
 By means of a secret charm, to draw  
 All creatures living beneath the sun,  
 That creep, or swim, or fly, or run,  
 After me so as you never saw !  
 And I chiefly use my charm  
 On creatures that do people harm,  
 The mole, and toad, and newt, and viper ;  
 And people call me the Pied Piper.'  
 (And here they noticed round his neck  
 A scarf of red and yellow stripe,  
 To match with his coat of the self-same cheque ;  
 And at the scarf's end hung a pipe ;



And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying  
 As if impatient to be playing  
 Upon this pipe, as low it dangled  
 Over his vesture so old-fangled.)  
 'Yet,' said he, 'poor piper as I am,  
 In Tartary I freed the Cham,<sup>1</sup>  
 Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats ;  
 I eased in Asia the Nizam<sup>2</sup>  
 Of a monstrous brood of vampyre-bats :  
 And as for what your brain bewilders,  
 If I can rid your town of rats  
 Will you give me a thousand guilders ?'  
 'One ? fifty thousand !'—was the exclamation  
 Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

## VII

Into the street the Piper stept,  
 Smiling first a little smile,  
 As if he knew what magic slept  
 In his quiet pipe the while ;  
 Then, like a musical adept,  
 To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,  
 And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled  
 Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled ;  
 And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,  
 You heard as if an army muttered ;  
 And the muttering grew to a grumbling ;  
 And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling ;  
 And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.  
 Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,  
 Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,  
 Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,  
 Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins  
 Cocking tails and pricking whiskers  
 Families by tens and dozens,  
 Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—  
 Followed the Piper for their lives.  
 From street to street he piped advancing,  
 And step for step they followed dancing,  
 Until they came to the river Weser,  
 Wherein all plunged and perished !  
 —Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,  
 Swam across and lived to carry  
 (As he, the manuscript he cherished,  
 To Rat-land home his commentary :  
 Which was, 'At the first shrill notes of the pipe,  
 I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,  
 And putting apples, wondrous ripe,  
 Into a cider-press's gripe :  
 And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,  
 And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,  
 And a drawing the corks of train-oil flasks,  
 And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks :  
 And it seemed as if a voice  
 (Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery  
 Is breathed) called out, "Oh rats, rejoice !  
 The world is grown to one vast drysaltery !

<sup>1</sup> The Chinese Emperor.<sup>2</sup> The title of an Indian monarch.



So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,  
 Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon !"  
 And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,  
 All ready staved, like a great sun shone  
 Glorious scarce an inch before me,  
 Just as methought it said, " Come, bore me !"  
 —I found the Weser rolling o'er me.'

## VIII

You should have heard the Hamelin people  
 Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.  
 ' Go,' cried the Mayor, ' and get long poles,  
 Poke out the nests and block up the holes !  
 Consult with carpenters and builders,  
 And leave in our town not even a trace  
 Of the rats !'—when suddenly up the face  
 Of the Piper perked in the market-place,  
 With a, ' First, if you please, my thousand guilders !'

## IX

A thousand guilders ! The Mayor looked blue ;  
 So did the Corporation too.  
 For council dinners made rare havoc  
 With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock ;  
 And half the money would replenish  
 Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.  
 To pay this sum to a wandering fellow  
 With a gipsy coat of red and yellow !  
 ' Beside,' quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,  
 ' Our business was done at the river's brink ;  
 We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,  
 And what's dead can't come to life, I think.  
 So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink  
 From the duty of giving you something for drink,  
 And a matter of money to put in your poke ;  
 But as for the guilders, what we spoke  
 Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.  
 Beside, our losses have made us thrifty ;  
 A thousand guilders ! Come, take fifty !'

## X

The Piper's face fell, and he cried  
 ' No trifling ! I can't wait ; beside !  
 I've promised to visit by dinnertime |  
 Bagdat, and accept the prime.  
 Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,  
 For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,  
 Of a nest of scorpions no survivor :  
 With him I proved no bargain-driver ;  
 With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver !  
 And folks who put me in a passion  
 May find me pipe to another fashion.'

## XI

' How ?' cried the Mayor, ' d'ye think I'll brook  
 Being worse treated than a Cook ?  
 Insulted by a lazy ribald  
 With idle pipe and vesture piebald ?  
 You threaten us, fellow ? Do your worst,  
 Blow your pipe there till you burst !'



## XII

Once more he stept into the street ;  
 And to his lips again  
 Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane ;  
 And ere he blew three notes (such sweet  
 Soft notes as yet musician's cunning  
 Never gave the enraptured air)  
 There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling  
 Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,  
 Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,  
 Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering  
 And, like fowls in a farmyard when barley is scattering,  
 Out came the children running,  
 All the little boys and girls,  
 With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,  
 And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,  
 Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after  
 The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

## XIII

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood  
 As if they were changed into blocks of wood,  
 Unable to move a step, or cry  
 To the children merrily skipping by—  
 And could only follow with the eye  
 That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.  
 But how the Mayor was on the rack,  
 And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,  
 As the Piper turned from the High Street  
 To where the Weser rolled its waters  
 Right in the way of their sons and daughters !  
 However he turned from South to West,  
 And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,  
 And after him the children pressed ;  
 Great was the joy in every breast.  
 ' He never can cross that mighty top !  
 He's forced to let the piping drop,  
 And we shall see our children stop !'  
 When, lo, as they reached the mountain's side,  
 A wondrous portal opened wide,  
 As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed ;  
 And the Piper advanced and the children followed,  
 And when all were in to the very last,  
 The door in the mountain-side shut fast.  
 Did I say, all ? No ! One was lame,  
 And could not dance the whole of the way ;  
 And in after years, if you would blame  
 His sadness, he was used to say,—  
 ' It's dull in our town since my playmates left !  
 I can't forget that I'm bereft  
 Of all the pleasant sights they see,  
 Which the Piper also promised me ;  
 For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,  
 Joining the town and just at hand,  
 Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,  
 And flowers put forth a fairer hue,  
 And everything was strange and new ;  
 The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,  
 And their dogs outran our fallow deer,



And honey-bees had lost their stings,  
 And horses were born with eagles' wings ;  
 And just as I became assured  
 My lame foot would be speedily cured,  
 The music stopped. and I stood still,  
 And found myself outside the hill,  
 Left alone against my will,  
 To go now limping as before,  
 And never hear of that country more !

## XIV

Alas, alas for Hamelin !

There came into many a burgher's pate  
 A text which says that Heaven's Gate  
 Ope to the rich at as easy rate  
 As the needle's eye takes a camel in !  
 The mayor sent East, West, North, and South,

To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,  
 Wherever it was men's lot to find him,  
 Silver and gold to his heart's content,  
 If he'd only return the way he went,

And bring the children behind him.  
 But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,  
 And Piper and dancers were gone for ever,  
 They made a decree that lawyers never

Should think their records dated duly  
 If, after the day of the month and year,  
 These words did not as well appear :  
 ' And so long after what happened here

On the Twenty-second of July,  
 Thirteen hundred and seventy-six ' :  
 And the better in memory to fix  
 The place of the children's last retreat,  
 They called it, the Pied Piper's Street—  
 Where any one playing on pipe or tabor  
 Was sure for the future to lose his labour.  
 Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern

To shock with mirth a street so solemn ;  
 But opposite the place of the cavern

They wrote the story on a column,  
 And on the great church-window painted  
 The same, to make the world acquainted  
 How their children were stolen away ;  
 And there it stands to this very day.

And I must not omit to say  
 That in Transylvania there's a tribe  
 Of alien people that ascribe  
 The outlandish ways and dress  
 On which their neighbours lay such stress,  
 To their fathers and mothers having risen  
 Out of some subterraneous prison  
 Into which they were trepanned  
 Long time ago in a mighty band  
 Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,  
 But how or why, they don't understand.

## XV

So, Willy, let you and me be wipers  
 Of scores out with all men—especially pipers !  
 And, whether they pipe us free from rats or from mice,  
 If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise !



## MEETING AT NIGHT

## I

The gray sea and the long black land ;  
 And the yellow half-moon large and low ;  
 And the startled little waves that leap  
 In fiery ringlets from their sleep,  
 As I gain the cove with pushing prow,  
 And quench its speed in the slushy sand.

## II

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach ;  
 Three fields to cross till a farm appears ;  
 A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch  
 And blue spurt of a lighted match,  
 And a voice less loud, thro' its joys and fears,  
 Than the two hearts beating each to each !

## PARTING AT MORNING

Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,  
 And the sun looked over the mountain's rim—  
 And straight was a path of gold for him,  
 And the need of a world of men for me.

## RUDEL TO THE LADY OF TRIPOLI

## I

I know a Mount, the gracious Sun perceives  
 First, when he visits, last, too, when he leaves  
 The world ; and, vainly favoured, it repays  
 The day-long glory of his steadfast gaze  
 By no change of its large calm front of snow.  
 And underneath the Mount, a Flower I know,  
 He cannot have perceived, that changes ever  
 At his approach ; and, in the lost endeavour  
 To live his life, has parted, one by one,  
 With all a flower's true graces, for the grace  
 Of being but a foolish mimic sun,  
 With ray-like florets round a disk-like face.  
 Men nobly call by many a name the Mount  
 As over many a land of theirs its large  
 Calm front of snow like a triumphal targe  
 Is reared, and still with old names, fresh ones vie,  
 Each to its proper praise and own account :  
 Men call the Flower the Sunflower, sportively.

## II

Oh, Angel of the East, one, one gold look  
 Across the waters to this twilight nook,  
 —The far sad waters, Angel, to this nook !

## III

Dear Pilgrim, art thou for the East indeed ?  
 Go !—saying ever as thou dost proceed,  
 That I, French Rudel, choose for my device  
 A sunflower outspread like a sacrifice



Before its idol. See ! These inexpert  
 And hurried fingers could not fail to hurt  
 The woven picture ; 'tis a woman's skill  
 Indeed ; but nothing baffled me, so, ill  
 Or well, the work is finished. Say, men feed  
 On songs I sing, and therefore bask the bees  
 On my flower's breast as on a platform broad :  
 But, as the flower's concern is not for these  
 But solely for the sun, so men applaud  
 In vain this Rudel, he is not looking here  
 But to the East—the East ! Go say this, Pilgrim dear !

'HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT  
 TO AIX.'<sup>1</sup>

[16—]

I

I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he ;  
 I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three ;  
 'Good speed !' cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew ;  
 'Speed !' echoed the wall to us galloping through ;  
 Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,  
 And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

II

Not a word to each other ; we kept the great pace  
 Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place ;  
 I turned in my saddle, and made its girths tight,  
 Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,  
 Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,  
 Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

III

'Twas moonset at starting ; but while we drew near  
 Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear ;  
 At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see ;  
 At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be ;  
 And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-chime,  
 So, Joris broke silence with, 'Yet there is time !'

IV

At Aerschot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,  
 And against him the cattle stood black every one,  
 To stare thro' the mist at us galloping past,  
 And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,  
 With resolute shoulders, each butting away  
 The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray :

V

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back  
 For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track ;  
 And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance  
 O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance !  
 And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon  
 His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

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<sup>1</sup> A purely imaginary episode. There is no basis in fact.



## VI

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned ; and cried Joris, ' Stay spur !  
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,  
We'll remember at Aix '—for one heard the quick wheeze  
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering knees,  
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,  
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

## VII

So, we were left galloping, Joris and I,  
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky ;  
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,  
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff ;  
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,  
And ' Gallop,' gasped Joris, ' for Aix is in sight !'

## VIII

' How they'll greet us !'—and all in a moment his roan  
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone ;  
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight  
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,  
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,  
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

## IX

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,  
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,  
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,  
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer ;  
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,  
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

## X

And all I remember is—friends flocking round  
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground ;  
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,  
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,  
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)  
Was no more than his due who brought good news from Ghent.

## THROUGH THE METIDJA TO ABD-EL-KADR

1842

## I

As I ride, as I ride,  
With a full heart for my guide,  
So its tide rocks my side,  
As I ride, as I ride,  
That, as I were double-eyed,  
He, in whom our Tribes confide,  
Is descried, ways untried  
As I ride, as I ride.

## II

As I ride, as I ride,  
To our Chief and his Allied,  
Who dares chide my heart's pride  
As I ride, as I ride ?



Or are witnesses denied—  
Through the desert waste and wide  
Do I glide unespied  
As I ride, as I ride ?

## III

As I ride, as I ride,  
When an inner voice has cried,  
The sands slide, nor abide  
(As I ride, as I ride)  
O'er each visioned homicide  
That came vaunting (has he lied ?)  
To reside—where he died,  
As I ride, as I ride.

## IV

As I ride, as I ride,  
Ne'er has spur my swift horse plied,  
Yet his hide, streaked and pied,  
As I ride, as I ride,  
Shows where sweat has sprung and dried  
—Zebra-footed, ostrich-thighed—  
How has vied stride with stride  
As I ride, as I ride !

## V

As I ride, as I ride,  
Could I loose what Fate has tied,  
Ere I pried, she should hide  
(As I ride, as I ride)  
All that's meant me : satisfied  
When the Prophet and the Bride  
Stop veins I'd have subside  
As I ride, as I ride !

## SIR EDWIN ARNOLD

1832-1904

EDWIN ARNOLD was the second son of Robert Coles Arnold, a country gentleman and Justice of the Peace for the counties of Kent and Sussex. He was born at Gravesend on the 10th of June, 1832. He received his early education at the King's School, Rochester. On leaving that institution he proceeded to King's College, London, from whence in due course he won a scholarship at University College, Oxford. In 1853 he won the Newdigate Prize for a poem entitled *The Feast of Belshazzar*, an exercise which 'displayed a vigour of thought and a glow of imagination, which combined with an astonishingly mature



power of expression to raise it far above the level of those usually undistinguished academic exercises, and to justify, in his case, the high hopes which too many of the Newdigate prize-winners are fated to disappoint. *The Feast of Belshazzar* can be read with pleasure and admiration at the present day, and takes rank with the composition of Bishop Heber, of Dean Milman, and of his namesake, the late Mr. Matthew Arnold, among the severely limited number of these productions which on their own merits deserve to live.' In the same year he was selected to deliver the address to Lord Derby on his installation as Chancellor of the University of Oxford. At this time he was only twenty-one years of age. In the following year he graduated B.A., with honours.

After taking his degree he was appointed second master at King Edward's School, Birmingham, a post which he relinquished in 1856, when he was chosen as Principal of the Government Sanscrit College at Poona. This appointment determined the direction of his talents. He held the position throughout the Indian Mutiny, and resigned it in 1861. He has given in his writings many brilliant and graphic descriptions of his Indian experiences, and there can be no doubt that the years which he spent in the East left their mark on his poetic genius, his political views, and his general literary character. 'It was there and then that he saturated himself with Oriental thought and learning, and that a style, naturally rich in sensuous imagery, acquired an almost Oriental opulence of colour; and it was there and then that he conceived that sympathy with the characteristic virtues of the higher type of Eastern character—its dignity, its patience, its devout stoicism and resignation—which so powerfully influenced his attitude in some of the great political controversies of recent years.'

The strong tendency towards poetical exercises, which had shown itself with such marked success in his student days, was not allowed to languish. During the three years which elapsed between his leaving Oxford and his acceptance of the post at Poona he published *Griselda: a Drama*, and *Poems: Narrative and Lyrical*. In 1860, while still at Poona, he published a volume on *Education in India*, and in 1862 a work on *The Marquis of Dalhousie's Administration*. His translations included the *Hero and Leander* of Musæus, the *Book of Good Counsel* from the *Hitopadesa*, and in 1877 he produced a transliteral grammar of



the Turkish language. The remainder of his work was mainly original poetry and an amazing amount of anonymous journalistic writing, amongst the latter being, according to his own estimate, about 10,000 leading articles in the *Daily Telegraph*, with which paper he was connected for forty years. In 1875 he published *The Indian Song of Songs*, which is a metrical paraphrase from the Sanscrit of the *Gita Govinda* of Jayadeva. His masterpiece, *The Light of Asia*, came in 1879. This beautiful epic upon the life and teaching of Buddha has passed through more than sixty editions in England and eighty in America, and has been translated into many languages. Oliver Wendell Holmes said of it :

‘ Its tone is so lofty that there is nothing with which to compare it but the New Testament ; it is full of beauty, now picturesque, now pathetic, now rising into the noblest realms of thought and aspiration ; it finds language penetrating, fluent, elevated, impassioned, musical always, in which to clothe its varied thoughts and sentiments.’

This is high, perhaps exaggerated, praise, but the fact that the poem is said to have inspired even Buddhists with a nobler conception of their own faith shows that there is in the work the soul of genius.

In this work he found the ideal subject for his complex poetic genius, the one subject calculated to call both his reflective and imaginative powers into fullest operation. A modern critic, writing in the journal which he served so well, says of it :

‘ His chosen theme was solemn with the mysticism and radiant with the colour of the East ; and it is hard to say which of the two elements enter the more deeply into the work. For *The Light of Asia* does not more truly live by the splendour of its descriptive imagery than by the intensity of its religious feeling ; and it was by this twofold æsthetic and spiritual charm that it won the suffrages of two such widely different classes of readers. To the artistic few it commended itself by its brilliant art ; to that vast and “ serious ” multitude of English-speaking people in either hemisphere for whom poetry, considered as such, has no meaning or message, its profoundly moving picture of the Indian Messiah made irresistible appeal. The success of the poem was as instant and triumphant as it was well-deserved. It was hailed alike by Asia and by America, no less than by Europe,



as the noblest presentment ever given in Western poetry of the Master on whose teachings and example is founded the faith of more than one-third of the human race.'

Another contribution to the flood of eulogy which is still fresh in the public mind is the following passage from the pen of Mr. Arthur Waugh, whose praise, however, is not unqualified :

'Of course, it is as the poet of the Indian faith that Sir Edwin Arnold made his reputation, and it may safely be said that few single poems of his generation have enjoyed so wide a vogue as *The Light of Asia*. Many things helped in its success ; but, above all other considerations, it was peculiarly happy in the moment of its conception. It appeared at a time when the concerns of our Indian Empire were conspicuously before the public ; and it taught the insular British mind (or the insular British mind believed that it taught it, which is much the same thing) to sympathize with an alien religion, and to trace in its philosophy a singular likeness to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

'It was immediately and amazingly successful. Thousands of people, to whom its rather turgid rhetoric must have been a mystical confusion, added it to their bookshelves, as "a book that nobody should be without," and it is safe to say that a hundred times more copies were bought than read. Those who really care for poetry must confess, however, that its qualities are poetically superficial. It owes almost everything to the splendour of its subject, and, while it certainly makes full and even brilliant use of certain aspects of that subject, the use is, after all, artistically elementary. Its warmth, its colour, the rich mystical imagery and luscious opulence of many of its passages are indisputable ; but, as a study of Buddhism, it is essentially on the surface. It is, as was inevitable, an outsider's study, a piece—shall we say ?—of glittering journalism, disguised in a brocaded robe of decorative verse.'

*The Light of the World*, though a poem of much power and beauty, was not so signal a success as its predecessor, *The Light of Asia*. In it he sought to do for Christianity what he had done for Buddhism. It may even be said that, to the many admirers of his previous works, it came as a disappointment. In it familiar thoughts gain nothing by their new statement, and critics are agreed that the peculiar lusciousness of style seems out of place.



In the year 1881 Arnold published a volume of Oriental verse, entitled *Indian Poetry*, and in 1883 *Pearls of the Faith, or Islam's Rosary : being the Ninety-nine Beautiful Names of Allah, with Comments in Verse*. This last was a series of short poems 'executed, for the most part, in a less finished style of workmanship than his longer Oriental efforts, but many of them admirably vigorous versifications of Moslem text and legend.' He subsequently produced *With Sa'di in the Garden*, a poem founded on a chapter from the *Bôstân* of the famous Persian poet Sa'di; *Indian Idylls*, from the Sanscrit of the Mahabhata poems; *In my Lady's Praise*, a collection of elegiac pieces, dedicated to the memory of the late Lady Arnold; and *Poems, National and Non-Oriental*.

Sir Edwin Arnold produced altogether about thirty volumes of poetry and prose, the result chiefly of his Oriental studies and his travels in many parts of the world. Japan came next to India in his affections. Of it he said: 'Japan is great, both morally and intellectually,' and of its people that they are 'a gentle and a noble race.' He was thrice married. His first wife was English, the second American, and the third, who survives him, was Tama Kurokawa, a Japanese lady educated in England. The poet's collection of foreign orders, conferred on him by potentates in recognition of his literary achievements, was quite unique. He was also honoured by his Sovereign with the Companionship of the Star of India and a Knight Commandership of the Indian Empire.

Arnold died on Thursday, the 25th of March, 1904. He had been for some time in failing health, was nearly blind, and partially paralyzed, but he maintained his cheerfulness and his interest in life and in literature until the last. He was always an optimist. He sings, in *The Light of the World*:

Our worst of woes  
Is like the foolish anguish of the babe,  
Whereat the mother, loving most, smiles most.

In accordance with his own wish, Sir Edwin Arnold's remains were cremated. The funeral service took place at Brookwood on Monday, the 28th of March, 1904. After the cremation his ashes were enclosed in an urn and finally placed (again in accordance with his expressed wish) in a niche in the wall of the chapel of University College, Oxford.



## FROM 'THE LIGHT OF ASIA,' BOOK V

Thus would he muse from noontide—when the land  
 Shimmered with heat, and walls and temples danced  
 In the reeking air—till sunset, noting not  
 The blazing globe roll down, nor evening glide  
 Purple and swift, across the softened fields ;  
 Nor the still coming of the stars, nor throb  
 Of drum-skins in the busy town, nor screech  
 Of owl and night-jar ; wholly wrapt from self  
 In keen unravelling of the threads of thought  
 And steadfast pacing of life's labyrinths.  
 Thus would he sit till midnight hushed the world,  
 Save where the beasts of darkness in the brake  
 Crept and cried out, as fear and hatred cry,  
 As lust and avarice and anger creep  
 In the black jungles of man's ignorance.  
 Then slept he for what space the fleet moon asks  
 To swim a tenth part of her cloudy sea ;  
 But rose ere the False-dawn, and stood again  
 Wistful on some dark platform of his hill,  
 Watching the sleeping earth with ardent eyes  
 And thoughts embracing all its living things,  
 While o'er the waving fields that murmur moved  
 Which is the kiss of Morn waking the lands,  
 And in the east that miracle of Day  
 Gathered and grew. At first a dusk so dim  
 Night seems still unaware of whispered dawn,  
 But soon—before the jungle-cock crows twice—  
 A white verge clear, a widening, brightening white  
 High as the herald-star, which fades in floods  
 Of silver, warming into pale gold, caught  
 By topmost clouds, and flaming on their rims  
 To fervent golden glow, flushed from the brink  
 With saffron, scarlet, crimson, amethyst ;  
 Whereat the sky burns splendid to the blue,  
 And robed in raiment of glad light, the King  
 Of Life and Glory cometh !

## FROM 'LIGHT OF THE WORLD'

Thou knowest of the Birth, and how there fell  
 Lauds out of Heaven to hail Him, and high songs  
 Of peace, and comfortable years to come ;  
 And of the bitter Prince ; the murdered babes,  
 The cry of childless mothers. How they fled—  
 Mary and Joseph—to the Land of Nile,  
 By Hebron and by Ziph, sore-toiling south  
 Over the Brook of Egypt. On their way  
 'Tis told the palm-trees stooped to give them fruit ;  
 That dragons of the Desert slid their scales—  
 Shamed to be deadly—into cleft and den ;  
 That robbers, by the road, flung spear and sword  
 Down on the sand, and laid their fierce brows there.  
 Convinced of evil by mere majesty  
 Of Babe and Mother. And dry Roses bloomed  
 Back into beauty, when their garments brushed  
 The Rose-bush ; and a wayside sycamore  
 Beneath whose leaves they rested, moved his boughs



From noon till evening with the moving sun  
 To make them shade. And, coming nigh to On—  
 Where stands the house of Ra,—its mighty god,  
 Cut in black porphyry, prodigious, feared,  
 Fell from his seat.

FROM 'POEMS ON THE MONTHS'

MAY

Who cares on the land to stay  
 Wasting the wealth of a day ?  
     The dull fields leave  
     For the meadows that heave,  
 And away to the sea !—away !  
 To the meadows far out on the deep,  
 Whose ploughs are the winds which sweep  
     The green furrows high  
     When into the sky  
 The silvery foam-bells leap.  
 At sea—my Bark ! at sea,  
 With the winds, and the wild clouds, and me,  
     The low shore soon  
     Will be down with the moon,  
 And none on the waves but we.  
 Thy wings are abroad, my Bird !  
 And the sound of their speed is heard.  
     The scud flashes west,  
     And the gull to her nest,  
 But they lag far behind us, my Bird !  
 White as my true-love's neck  
 Are the sails that shadow thy deck ;  
     And thine image wan,  
     Like a stream-mirrored swan,  
 Lies dim on thy dancing track.  
 On ! on, with a swoop and a swirl,  
 High over the clear wave's curl ;  
     Under thy prow  
     Like a fairy now  
 Make the blue water bubble with pearl !  
 Lo, yonder, my Lady ! the light ;  
 'Tis the last of the land in sight !  
     Look once—then, away,  
     Bows soaked in the spray,  
 Lighted on by star-lamps of the Night.

DECEMBER

In fretwork of frost, and spangle of snow,  
 Unto his end the Year doth wend ;  
 And sad for some the days did go,  
 And glad for some was beginning and end ;  
 But, sad or glad, grieve not for his death,  
 Mournfully counting your measures of breath,  
 Ye that before the stars began  
 Were promise of woman and seed of man ;  
 Ye that are older than Aldebaran !



It was but a ring put about the sun,  
 One passing dance of our planet done,  
 One step in the infinite minuet  
 Which the white worlds pace, to a music set  
 By life immortal and love divine ;  
 Whereof is struck, in our three score and ten,  
 One chord of the harmony, fair and fine,  
 Of that which maketh us women and men.  
 In fretwork of frost and spangle of snow,  
 Sad or glad, let the Old Year go !

FROM THE PERSIAN OF SA'DI'S 'BÓSTÂN'

A ROSE OF THE 'GARDEN OF FRAGRANCE'

Of hearts disconsolate see the state :  
 To bear a breaking heart may prove thy fate.  
 Help to be happy those thine aid can bless,  
 Mindful of thine own day of helplessness.  
 If thou at others' doors need'st not to pine,  
 In thanks to Allah drive no man from thine.  
 Over the orphan's path protection spread !  
 Pluck out his heart-grief, lift his drooping head.  
 When with his neck bent low thou spiest one,  
 Kiss not the lifted face of thine own son !  
 Take heed these go not weeping. Allah's throne  
 Shakes to the sigh the orphan breathes alone.  
 There was a merchant, who, upon his way—  
 Meeting one fatherless and lamed—did stay  
 To draw the thorn which pricked his foot ; and passed :  
 And 'twas forgot ; and the man died at last :  
 But in a dream the Prince of Khojand spies  
 That man again, walking in Paradise ;  
 Walking and talking in the Blessed Land,  
 And what he said the Prince could understand :  
 For he said this : plucking the heavenly posies,  
 'Ajâb ! that one thorn made me many Roses !'

WILLIAM MORRIS

1834-1896

WILLIAM MORRIS was born at Walthamstow on the 24th of March, 1834. He was educated first at Marlborough, whence he proceeded to Oxford. 'As a writer,' says Mr. Robert Steele in an exhaustive sketch contributed to Mr. Chambers' *Cyclopædia of English Literature*, 'Morris belongs to the Romantic school at



its best and healthiest. The pre-Raphaelite movement, of which his work is but the direct expression, is a phase of the great romantic development which, arising in our country, finding its expressions in the poems of Ossian, the Percy Ballads, and the works of Chatterton, spread to the Continent of Europe, made itself deeply felt in Germany and in Western Europe generally, while pursuing in England a course freed from some of the excesses of disordered imagination which characterized it abroad.'

Morris began his literary career as a contributor to the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*. The tone of his poetry was greatly influenced by a careful study of the works of Tennyson and Browning, and he rapidly developed into something more than a skilful versifier. The best of his earlier poems are *The Defence of Guenevere*, *King Arthur's Tomb*, *The Blue Closet*, and the *Tune of Seven Towers*.

Some years elapsed between the publication of these and *Jason*, 'a poem originally designed to take its place in the framework of *The Earthly Paradise*, but which had outgrown in the making the limits of that scheme.' Then followed *The Earthly Paradise* itself, a collection of poems with which the name of Morris is chiefly associated in the mind of the student. These poems, which 'mark the second stage in his development as a writer,' are very superior in quality and cultured in tone. 'The happiness of epithet and of local colouring, the picturesque detail and the appropriate phrase which give life and individuality to his pictures, are for the most part known only by their effects and only fully appreciated in the retrospect.'

In 1872 Morris published a poem entitled *Love is Enough*, which, though not so favourably spoken of as many of his other works, has many good qualities all its own. One critic has dwelt upon the skill with which the difficult Middle English metres are handled, praising it to the extent of saying that it 'enlarges the limits of English verse.'

Morris paid some visits to Iceland, and this experience resulted in a third period of development. He issued a number of translations from Icelandic literature, and amongst them an epic entitled *Sigurd the Volsung*. This is accounted his finest poetical work. A still further development of his genius is marked by translations from the *Æneid*, the *Odyssey*, and the work of



*Beowulf*. Speaking of his translation of the *Odyssey*, Mr. Watts-Dunton says :

‘The two specially Homeric qualities—those, indeed, which set Homer apart from all other poets—are eagerness and dignity. That Tennyson could have given us the Homeric dignity his magnificent rendering of a famous fragment of the *Iliad* shows. Chapman’s translations show that the eagerness also can be caught. Morris could not have given the dignity of Homer, but then, while Tennyson has left us but a few lines speaking with the dignity of the *Iliad*, Morris gave us a literal translation of the entire *Odyssey*, which, though it missed the Homeric dignity, secured the eagerness as completely as Chapman’s free and easy paraphrase.’

The influence of Morris is felt not merely in the field of literature, but perhaps even more fully in those of art and politics. He died on the 3rd of October, 1896.

#### FROM ‘THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JASON’

I know a little garden close  
Set thick with lily and red rose,  
Where I would wander if I might  
From dewy dawn to dewy night,  
And have one with me wandering.

And though within it no birds sing,  
And though no pillared house is there,  
And though the apple-boughs are bare  
Of fruit and blossom, would to God,  
Her feet upon the green grass trod,  
And I beheld them as before.

There comes a murmur from the shore,  
And in the place two fair streams are,  
Drawn from the purple hills afar,  
Drawn down unto the restless sea ;  
The hills whose flowers ne’er fed the bee  
The shore no ship has ever seen,  
Still beaten by the billows green,  
Whose murmur comes unceasingly  
Unto the place for which I cry.

For which I cry both day and night,  
For which I let slip all delight,  
That maketh me both deaf and blind,  
Careless to win, unskilled to find,  
And quick to lose what all men seek.

Yet tottering as I am, and weak,  
Still have I left a little breath  
To seek within the jaws of death  
An entrance to that happy place,  
To seek the unforgotten face  
Once seen, once kissed, once reft from me  
Anigh the murmuring of the sea.





## COVENTRY PATMORE

1823-1896

COVENTRY PATMORE was born at Woodford, in Essex. For some years he was assistant librarian at the British Museum. His first volume of poetry appeared in 1844, but it was severely criticised. In 1853 he published another volume entitled *Tamerton Church Tower*. This was well received, a fact which encouraged him to publish *The Angel in the House*, the poem by which he is now best remembered. His subsequent works include *The Unknown Eros, and Other Odes* (1877), *Amelia* (1878), *Principle in Art* (1889), *Religio Poetæ* (1893), and *The Rod, the Root, and the Flower* (1895).

## THE YEAR

The crocus, while the days are dark,  
Unfolds its saffron sheen ;  
At April's touch, the crudest bark  
Discovers gems of green.

Then sleep the seasons, full of might ;  
While slowly swells the pod,  
And rounds the peach, and in the night  
The mushroom bursts the sod.

## SCOTTISH POETS

## JAMES HOGG

1770-1835

JAMES HOGG, better known to fame as 'The Ettrick Shepherd,' was born in the vale of Ettrick, in the county of Selkirk. His date of baptism is given in the parish register as December 9th, 1770. He was descended from a family of shepherds. In early childhood he was employed as a cowherd, until he was sufficiently experienced to be entrusted with a flock of sheep. His first appearance as a poet was in 1801, when he published a small volume of songs. He was introduced by the son of his employer to Sir Walter Scott, and gave the great poet some help in the collecting of old ballads for the *Border Minstrelsy*. In 1807 he published another volume of poems entitled *The*



*Mountain Bard.* After a period of sheep-farming in the island of Harris, which proved unsuccessful, he went to Edinburgh, and tried to live by means of his literary talents.

Amongst the many volumes which issued from his pen we may mention *The Forest Minstrel* (1810); *The Spy*; *The Queen's Wake* (1813); *Mador of the Moor*, a poem in the Spenserian stanza; *The Pilgrims of the Sun*, in blank verse; *The Poetic Mirror*, and *The Hunting of Badlewe*.

As is the case with most self-educated men, he was vain of his position and attainments, and not without reason. But in his vanity there was 'a bonhomie and a simplicity utterly different from the insolence of pride. He was hospitable, liberal, and generous in disposition, upright and straightforward in principle.'

His works—prose compositions, chiefly tales, 'rough and racy,' as Lord Byron termed them, and his poetry—amount to about thirty volumes in all, besides a vast number of contributions to annuals and other journals. His poetical works consist chiefly of songs, ballads, and elfin legends. He was at home in the fairy world, and it is in such fantastic and airy regions that his talent is most conspicuous. *The Queen's Wake* is undoubtedly the most notable of his poems, and is exquisitely wrought out. It comprises a series of lyric legends, supposed to be sung before Mary Queen of Scots at a wake at Holyrood Palace by a number of Scottish minstrels.

He died on the 21st of November, 1835, and was buried near his birthplace in Ettrick Churchyard. His widow received a royal pension in 1853.

Hogg has been described by Professor Ferrier as the greatest poet next to Burns that has ever sprung from the bosom of the common people—an opinion which is shared by not a few eminent critics. Jeffrey speaks of him as a poet in the highest acceptation of the term. The following forcible criticism, eulogistic with but slight reservation, is from the latest volume of Mr. Chambers' *Cyclopædia of English Literature*:

'The truly amazing thing about the shepherd is that, with his rollicking, boisterous, and almost coarse humour, and his notorious defects of taste, he nevertheless sustained unbroken flights in almost pure ether. He could abandon himself entirely to the genius of local and legendary story; he certainly proved



himself at home in scenes of visionary splendour and unimagined purity and bliss. His *Kilmeny* is one of the finest of fairy-tales; passages in the *Pilgrims of the Sun* have much of the same ethereal beauty. Akin to this feature in Hogg's poetry is the spirit of many of his songs—a lyrical flow that is sometimes inexpressibly sweet and musical, and is withal spontaneous and natural. He wanted art to construct a fable, and taste to make the most of his fertility in ideas and imagery; but few poets impress us more with the feeling of direct inspiration, or convince us so strongly that poetry is indeed an art unteachable and untaught.'

### FROM 'THE QUEEN'S WAKE'

#### KILMENY'S VISIONS IN FAIRY-LAND

She saw a sun on a summer sky,  
And clouds of amber sailing by,  
A lovely land beneath her lay,  
And that land had glens and mountains gray;  
And that land had valleys and hoary piles,  
And merled seas, and a thousand isles;  
Its fields were speckled, its forests green,  
And its lakes were all of the dazzling sheen,  
Like magic mirrors, where slumbering lay,  
The sun, and the sky, and the cloudlet gray.

\* \* \* \* \*

She saw the corn wave on the vale;  
She saw the deer run down the dale;  
She saw the plaid and the broad claymore,  
And the brows that the badge of freedom bore:  
And she thought she had seen the land before.

She saw a lady sit on a throne,  
The fairest that ever the sun shone on!  
A lion licked her hand of milk,  
And she held him in a leash of silk;  
A leifu maiden stood at her knee,  
With a silver wand and a melting e'e,  
Her sovereign shield, till love stole in,  
And poisoned all the fount within.

#### THE SKYLARK

Bird of the wilderness,  
Blithesome and cumberless,  
Sweet be thy matin o'er moorland and lea!  
Emblem of happiness,  
Blest is thy dwelling-place—  
O to abide in the desert with thee!  
Wild is thy lay and loud,  
Far in the downy cloud,  
Love gives it energy, love gave it birth;  
Where, on thy dewy wing,  
Where art thou journeying?  
Thy lay is in heaven, thy love is on earth.



O'er fell and fountain sheen,  
 O'er moor and mountain green,  
 O'er the red streamer that heralds the day,  
 Over the cloudlet dim,  
 Over the rainbow's rim,  
 Musical cherub, soar, singing, away !  
 Then, when the gloaming comes,  
 Low in the heather blooms,  
 Sweet will thy welcome and bed of love be  
 Emblem of happiness,  
 Blest is thy dwelling-place—  
 O to abide in the desert with thee !

## SIR WALTER SCOTT

1771-1832

WALTER SCOTT was born in Edinburgh on the 15th of August, 1771. He was descended from a branch of the noble house of Buccleugh, one of the most ancient and illustrious of the Border families. His father was a Writer to the Signet, and the first of the family who followed a professional calling. Owing to a serious illness from which the poet suffered during his infancy, his right leg was affected with lameness, which somewhat disfigured him during the rest of his life. He was sent, for the sake of his health, to live for awhile in the country, the place chosen for this purpose being his grandfather's farm, Sandyknowe, on the banks of the Tweed. At the age of six he was brought back to his home in the capital, and was sent to the High School. From thence he proceeded in due course to the University of Edinburgh, and later became apprenticed to his father. When he had attained the age of twenty-one he was called to the Scottish Bar in the Court of Sessions.

'To realize the true greatness of the subject of this memoir,' says a writer in the 'Canterbury Poets' Series, 'it is necessary to have at least some superficial knowledge of Scotland as it was at the close of the eighteenth century. Small country as it is, it was then more of a *terra incognita* to Southerners, and so far as the Highlands were concerned, to the Lowland Scotch themselves, than nowadays is Australia or New Zealand. The Highlands constituted, to all intents and purposes, a separate State, in many respects a hostile one ; for though the days of Roderick Dhu were over, there still lingered among the Lowland peasantry



a deep suspicion and dislike, mingled with angry contempt, of their Celtic neighbours. We are told that there is no such race extant as the pure Celtic; but howsoever this may be, we are accustomed to regard as Celts the Gaelic-speaking populations of Ireland and Scotland; and it was this Celtic survival that was steadily dwindling away when the genius of one man arrested its retrogression as with the wave of a magic wand. Then came the Peninsular campaign, where the clansmen charged on the battlefields side by side with the men of Clydesdale and the Lothians, until a time came when an Armstrong or Elliott, a Morton or Maxwell, called themselves, in common with the Camerons, Macleods, and Macdonalds, simply Scotchmen, instead of Borderers or Gaels. It is just about a century<sup>1</sup> since Scott, while an apprentice-at-law in Edinburgh, having to go on a legal errand into the Highlands in connection with some non-rent-paying Maclarens, was accompanied, as a matter of course, by an escort of a sergeant and six soldiers. That the escort proved quite unnecessary is not to the point; the fact of its having been considered advisable being quite eloquent enough a commentary on the civilization of the then vaguely known districts lying west and north of that famous pass in the Trossachs, out of which there was not so long before Scott's time but one way of issue—namely, by a rude ladder down a precipitate slope, a ladder compact of branches and roots of trees.'

The same writer gives another striking instance of the very rude and primitive state of things which existed in these regions in the earlier years of the eighteenth century. He tells us that when the future poet and novelist drove in a small gig through Liddersdale, in the southland, his progress attracted much wondering attention, for never before had the rustics of this uncivilized quarter seen any wheeled vehicle pass along their stony braes and rough moorland paths. Bearing this in mind, he argues that it is easier to realize that the famous old Border reiver, Auld Wat o' Harden, was not a very remote ancestor of Scott. Auld Wat was the husband of the famous Mary, the 'Flower of Yarrow,' who, upon a certain occasion, finding that her larder was short of victuals for the dinner-table, served up a dish for the delectation of her expectant husband and his

<sup>1</sup> This extract was written in 1885.



guests which, upon the removal of the cover, disclosed to view a pair of spurs. The trick was played as a strong hint that if a man will not hunt neither shall he eat. It was this Wat's great-grandson who was popularly known as 'Beardie,' from the long beard which he wore in memory of the execution of Charles I. He, again, was great-grandfather of Walter Scott, the greatest of Scottish writers, whether considered as a novelist or a poet.

Though Scott's fame as a poet is unquestionably somewhat dwarfed by his greater reputation as a novelist, he is clearly entitled to a place in the front rank of British writers of verse. To the inborn genius which marked him out for distinction under any circumstances he added a romantic temperament which he fostered and fed with the material which the imaginations of the ancients have placed within the reach of the diligent searcher. It is needless to say that he loved the ever-increasing store of books in his library almost, if not quite as much, as he loved the wild and glorious scenery of his native country. His inspiration came from both. To the lamp and the easy-chair, to the stillness of the house before the other inmates were yet astir, to the murmuring of the brooklet, the humming of the bees, the singing of the birds—to each and all are we indebted for the liquid and learned loveliness of the lines which came from his pen. Spenser, Boccaccio, and Froissart were his delight.

Walter Scott was disappointed in his first love, but he consoled himself, in 1797, by leading to the altar a lady of French extraction, with whom he had formed a firm friendship during a tour in the Lake District of Cumberland. Whether he did not take kindly to his profession, or his profession did not take kindly to him, will perhaps never be fully known, but he certainly was not a success as a lawyer, and that calling, which never brought him more than £200 a year, was soon abandoned for more congenial and lucrative pursuits.

In 1799 Scott was appointed, through the influence of his kinsman, the Duke of Buccleugh, to the post of Sheriff-Deputy of Selkirkshire, which is poetically known as Ettrick Forest. This office brought him an annual income of £300. His wife was possessed of some private means, and so they were enabled to establish themselves in a farm, called Ashestiel, on the banks of the Tweed, not far from Yarrow. This house, in which Scott



lived for the greater part of eight years, 'stood in an old-fashioned garden fenced with holly hedges, and on a high bank, which was divided from the river he loved so well only by a narrow strip of green meadow.' Here he devoted himself entirely to literary work, with marked success, having already drawn attention to his genius by the publication of a number of exquisite ballads and three volumes of the *Border Minstrelsy*. In the years which followed upon this move some of his best poems were written. In 1811 he purchased the estate on Tweedside, where he subsequently built the baronial residence of Abbotsford. It was thus that he at length realized his cherished dream of becoming a Scottish *laird* or landowner.

It was at Ashestiel that the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, his first great poem, was completed. It was published in January, 1805. The poem presents to us in language the most dignified and well-measured a majestic picture of the wild Border life of days gone by. The hoary-headed minstrel, with his harp as the only companion and comforter of his weary journeyings, takes rank as one of the most superb creations of poetical literature. The poet himself says that the interest of this poem depends mainly upon the style, and though this may be thought to imply a comparison which is unfair to the subject, yet it is just in view of the fact that the style is absolutely faultless. The poem is conspicuous amongst the writings even of Scott himself for variety of versification, depth of feeling, and 'glow of inspiration.' Its entire success immediately secured for its author a high reputation as a poet.

*Marmion*, which brought new and increased fame to its author, appeared in 1808. Two years afterwards he published *The Lady of the Lake*, which is perhaps the best-known of his poems at the present day. From that time to 1815 Scott was engaged in the composition of his remaining poems, *The Vision of Don Roderick*, *Rokeby*, *The Bridal of Triermain*, and *The Lord of the Isles*. Of these, *The Vision* met with comparatively small success, *Rokeby* evoked only a moderate amount of enthusiasm, and *The Lord of the Isles* fell rather flat. But the reputation he had gained by means of his three great poems was so great that the inferiority was only looked upon as 'in the comparative mood.'

In a history of poetry it would be out of place to do more



than refer in passing to the fact that Scott owes the greatness of his fame even more to his *Waverley Novels* than to his poems. It was mainly on account of these masterpieces that he was created a Baronet by George IV. in 1820. For some years after this honour was conferred on him his life was in all respects an enviable one. But in 1826 there came a sad reverse in his fortunes. The firm of Ballantyne and Co., printers, in which he had for many years been a secret partner, became insolvent, and the proportion of liability which lay upon the shoulders of Scott amounted to £130,000. The burden of this enormous debt cast a gloom over the closing years of the poet's life. Friends were not lacking in this hour of misfortune, and offers were made to him which had as their object the lightening of so serious a blow, but all such proffered aid was firmly and respectfully declined. Sir Walter preferred to set himself assiduously to work in the hope of in some measure reducing the deficit by means of his own literary exertions. This object he only partly accomplished. At his death, which took place on his return from a journey to Italy and the Mediterranean, which had been undertaken for the benefit of his health, the debt still amounted to £54,000. It was only by the sale of his copyrights that the whole was finally paid in 1847.

It was on the 21st of September, 1832, that Sir Walter Scott breathed his last. 'It was a beautiful day, so warm that every window was wide open, and so perfectly still that the sound most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as his loved ones knelt around the bed, and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes.' His remains lie buried in the family grave, which is situated among the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey, where in life the poet had loved to linger and to dream.

Scott's life at Ashiestiel may serve, says Dr. Collier, as a specimen of his routine to the last, when he was in the country. 'Rising at five, he lit his own fire (if it was cold weather), dressed with care, and went out to see his favourite horse. At six he was seated at his desk in his shooting-jacket or other out-of-doors garb, with a dog or two couched at his feet. There he wrote till breakfast-time, at nine or ten; and by that time he had, in his own words, "broken the neck of the day's work." A couple of hours after breakfast were also given to the pen,



and at twelve he was "his own man"—free for the day. By one he was on horseback, with his greyhounds led by his side, ready for some hours' coursing; or he was gliding in a boat over some deep pool on the Tweed, salmon-spear in hand, watching in the sunlight for a silver-scaled twenty-pounder. Such sports, varied with breezy rides by green glen and purple moorland, closed the day, whose early hours had been given to the Battle of Flodden or the romantic wanderings of Fitz-James.'

Professor Craik is the author of a passage which throws a clear and valuable light on the colouring of Scott's earlier inspirations. He says: 'Walter Scott was never accounted one of the Lake Poets; yet he, as well as Wordsworth and Coleridge, was early a drinker at the fountain of German poetry; his commencing publication was a translation of Bürger's *Lenore* (1796), and the spirit and manner of his original compositions were, from the first, evidently and powerfully influenced by what had thus awakened his poetical faculty. His robust and manly character of mind, however, and his strong nationalism, with the innate disposition of his imagination to live in the past rather than in the future, saved him from being seduced into either the puerilities or the extravagances to which other imitators of the German writers among us were thought to have, more or less, given way; and having soon found in the popular ballad-poetry of his own country all the qualities which had most attracted him in his foreign favourites, with others which had an equal or still greater charm for his heart and fancy, he henceforth gave himself up almost exclusively to the more congenial inspiration of that native minstrelsy. His poems are all lays and romances of chivalry, but infinitely finer than any that had ever before been written. With all their irregularity and carelessness (qualities that in some sort are characteristic of and essential to this kind of poetry), that element of life in all writing, which comes of the excited feeling and earnest belief of the writer, is never wanting; this animation, fervour, enthusiasm—call it by what name we will—exists in greater strength in no poetry than in that of Scott, redeeming a thousand defects, and triumphing over all the reclamations of criticism. It was this, no doubt, more than anything else, which at once took the public admiration by storm.'



## FROM 'THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL'

## DESCRIPTION OF MELROSE ABBEY

David I. (often called St. David), King of Scotland, founded and endowed the Monastery of Melrose. Sir W. Scott's note is: David I. of Scotland purchased the reputation of sanctity by founding and liberally endowing not only the monastery of Melrose, but those of Kelso, Jedburgh, and many others, which led to the well-known observation of his successor that he was *a sore saint for the crown*.

If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,  
Go visit it by the pale moonlight ;  
For the gay beams of lightsome day  
Gild, but to flout, the ruins gray.  
When the broken arches are black in night,  
And each shafted oriel glimmers white ;  
When the cold light's uncertain shower  
Streams on the ruin'd central tower ;  
When buttress and buttress, alternately,  
Seem framed of ebon and ivory ;  
When silver edges the imagery,  
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die  
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,  
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,  
Then go—but go alone the while—  
Then view St. David's ruin'd pile ;  
And, home returning, soothly swear,  
Was never scene so sad and fair ! . . .

The moon on the east oriel shone,  
Through slender shafts of shapely stone,  
By foliated tracery combined ;  
Thou would'st have thought some fairy's hand  
'Twixt poplars straight the osier wand,  
In many a freakish knot, had twined ;  
Then framed a spell, when the work was done,  
And changed the willow-wreaths to stone.  
The silver light, so pale and faint,  
Shewed many a prophet and many a saint,  
Whose image on the glass was dyed :  
Full in the midst, his Cross of Red  
Triumphant Michael brandished,  
And trampled the Apostate's pride.  
The moonbeam kiss'd the holy pane,  
And threw on the pavement a bloody stain.

## LOVE OF COUNTRY

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land !  
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd  
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd  
From wandering on a foreign strand !  
If such there breathe, go, mark him well  
For him no minstrel raptures swell ;  
High though his titles, proud his name,  
Boundless his wealth, as wish can claim ;



Despite those titles, power, and pelf,  
 The wretch, concentr'd all in self,  
 Living, shall forfeit fair renown,  
 And, doubly dying, shall go down  
 To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,  
 Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung.  
 O Caledonia ! stern and wild,  
 Meet nurse for a poetic child !  
 Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,  
 Land of the mountain and the flood,  
 Land of my sires ! what mortal hand  
 Can e'er untie the filial band  
 That knits me to thy rugged strand !  
 Still as I view each well-known scene,  
 Think what is now, and what hath been,  
 Seems as, to me, of all bereft,  
 Sole friends thy woods and streams were left ;  
 And thus I love them better still,  
 Even in extremity of ill.  
 By Yarrow's streams still let me stray,  
 Though none should guide my feeble way ;  
 Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,  
 Although it chill my withered cheek ;  
 Still lay my head by Teviot stone,  
 Though there, forgotten and alone,  
 The bard may draw his parting groan.

FROM 'MARMION'

NORHAM CASTLE AT SUNSET

Day set on Norham's castled steep,  
 And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,  
 And Cheviot's mountains lone :  
 The battled towers, the donjon keep,  
 The loophole grates, where captives weep,  
 The flanking walls that round it sweep,  
 In yellow lustre shone.  
 The warriors on the turrets high,  
 Moving athwart the evening sky,  
 Seem'd forms of giant height :  
 Their armour, as it caught the rays,  
 Flash'd back again the western blaze,  
 In lines of dazzling light.

St. George's banner, broad and gay,  
 Now faded, as the fading ray  
 Less bright, and less, was flung ;  
 The evening gale had scarce the power  
 To wave it on the Donjon Tower,  
 So heavily it hung.  
 The scouts had parted on their search,  
 The Castle gates were barr'd ;  
 Above the gloomy portal arch,  
 Timing his footsteps to a march,  
 The Warder kept his guard,  
 Low humming, as he paced along  
 Some ancient Border gathering-song.



## FROM 'IVANHOE'

## HYMN OF THE HEBREW MAID

When Israel, of the Lord beloved,  
 Out from the land of bondage came,  
 Her father's God before her moved,  
 An awful guide in smoke and flame.  
 By day, along the astonished lands  
 The cloudy pillar glided slow ;  
 By night, Arabia's crimson'd sands  
 Return'd the fiery column's glow.

There rose the choral hymn of praise,  
 And trump and timbrel answer'd keen ;  
 And Zion's daughters poured their lays,  
 With priest's and warrior's voice between.  
 No portents now our foes amaze,  
 Forsaken Israel wanders lone ;  
 Our fathers would not know Thy ways,  
 And Thou hast left them to their own.

But, present still, though now unseen !  
 When brightly shines the prosperous day,  
 Be thoughts of Thee a cloudy screen  
 To temper the deceitful ray.  
 And oh, when stoops on Judah's path  
 In shade and storm the frequent night,  
 Be Thou, long-suffering, slow to wrath,  
 A burning and a shining light !

Our harps we left by Babel's streams,  
 The tyrant's jest, the Gentile's scorn ;  
 No censer round our altar beams,  
 And mute are timbrel, trump, and horn.  
 But Thou hast said, ' The blood of goat,  
 The flesh of rams, I will not prize ;  
 A contrite heart, a humble thought,  
 Are Mine accepted sacrifice.'

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

1777-1844

'No poetry of this time,' says Dr. Craik, 'is probably so deeply and universally written upon the popular heart and memory as Campbell's greater lyrics.'

Thomas Campbell was born in Glasgow on the 27th of July, 1777. He came of an old Highland family, the Campbells of Kirnan, in Argyllshire, who traced their descent from the first Norman lord of Lochawe. Their property had passed from the family, and the father of the poet carried on business in Glasgow as a



merchant, but was not very prosperous, his latter days being spent in retirement, which was partly saved from absolute penury by a pension from a provident society.

Thomas received a good education, and entered the University of Glasgow, where he distinguished himself chiefly by his translation from the Greek. He won a prize for an English poem on *The Origin of Evil*, modelled on the style of Pope. Other poems, written before he was seventeen years of age, evinced his precocious talent in the art of versifying. So marked was his gift for the translation of Greek authors that Professor Young pronounced his rendering of part of the *Clouds* of Aristophanes as the best exercise of the kind ever submitted by any student of the University. When he was only twenty-one he created quite a sensation in the literary world by the publication of *The Pleasures of Hope* (1799), which ran through seven editions in three years. The copyright of the poem was sold for £60, but for some years the publishers gave Campbell £50 on every new edition of two thousand copies, and allowed him, in 1803, to publish a quarto subscription copy, by means of which he made £1,000. After the publication of the first edition 154 lines were added to the poem, which was greatly admired and justly praised for its high tone and exquisite finish.

Campbell was at first intended for the ministry, but he abandoned that idea, and spent a short while in Edinburgh with an idea of studying law. But he eventually decided to devote all his energies to the pursuit of literature.

Soon after the publication of *The Pleasures of Hope* the poet went to the Continent. His departure took place on the 1st of June, 1800. After landing at Hamburg he went to Ratisbon, where he witnessed the decisive battle which gave that place to the French. 'The poet stood with the monks of the Scottish college of St. James, on the ramparts near the monastery, while a charge of Klenau's cavalry was made upon the French. He saw no other scenes of actual warfare, but made various excursions into the interior, and was well received by General Moreau and the other French officers. It has been generally supposed that Campbell was present at the Battle of Hohenlinden, but it was not fought until some weeks after he had left Bavaria.' Whether present at the time or no, he has certainly commemorated this battle in one of the noblest poems of its kind in the language.



Campbell was for some time a tutor in the family of Mr. Downie, of Appin, in the Highlands, having previously held a similar position in the Island of Mull. He married his cousin, Matilda Sinclair, and settled down near London. Though happy in this union, a gloom was cast over the lives of both by the death of one son and the insanity of another. He was constantly worried, moreover, by somewhat straitened circumstances, occasioned chiefly by his generosity to his mother and sisters. His health also caused him much anxiety, but he was obliged to labour without intermission in order to support his family. Before and after the death of his wife, which occurred in 1828, he was a frequent visitor to the Continent, and in 1834 he went as far as Algiers. He was three times elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University. During his later years he received a pension from the Government, and lived chiefly in London, but he retired eventually to Boulogne, where he died in 1844. His remains were brought to England and buried in Westminster Abbey. It is recorded that at his funeral a portion of earth from the grave of Kosciusko at Cracow was thrown into his grave by a member of the Polish Association as a memento of his devotion to the cause of Poland.

During his residence on the Danube and the Elbe Campbell wrote some of his beautiful minor poems, which were published in the *Morning Chronicle*. Amongst these was the *Exile of Erin*. In 1802 appeared *Lochiel's Warning* and *The Battle of Hohenlinden*. In 1809 he published *Gertrude of Wyoming*, which ranks next to the *Pleasures of Hope* in importance amongst his works. It is a touching tale of an Indian invasion of that Pennsylvanian village during the American War of Independence. Hazlitt refers to it as a 'historical paraphrase of Mr. Wordsworth's *Ruth*.' A Swiss tale, entitled *Theodric*, is almost universally adjudged to be 'the purest in literature' of his poems. Other poetical works of his are *The Pilgrim of Glencoe*, which is not equal in merit to his other works, *The Battle of the Baltic*, *Ye Mariners of England*, and *O'Connor's Child*.

Campbell has proved himself a valuable and reliable critic in his celebrated work *Specimens of the British Poets*.

In genius and taste Campbell has been frequently compared to Gray, whom he certainly resembles in many details. The same delicacy and purity of sentiment, picturesqueness, and



elevation of imagery are observable in the writings of both. One of Campbell's many biographers says of him : ' His scholarship was extensive ; he was prouder of his Greek than he was of his poetry. His industry was great, though fortune often compelled its expenditure on objects beneath his genius. No man was more earnest in his sympathy with all that was generous and noble, nor more truly fulfilled the practical duties of family affection. His failings every good heart will forget in the splendour of his genius and the amiableness of his personal character.'

## LOCHIEL'S WARNING

WIZARD—LOCHIEL

WIZARD

Lochiel, Lochiel ! beware of the day  
 When the Lowlands shall meet thee in battle array !  
 For a field of the dead rushes red on my sight,  
 And the clans of Culloden are scattered in fight :  
 They rally, they bleed, for their kingdom and crown ;  
 Woe, woe, to the riders that trample them down !  
 Proud Cumberland prances, insulting the slain,  
 And their hoof-beaten bosoms are trod to the plain  
 But hark ! through the fast-flashing lightning of war,  
 What steed to the desert flies frantic and far ?  
 'Tis thine, O Glenullin ! whose bride shall await,  
 Like a love-lighted watch-fire, all night at the gate.  
 A steed comes at morning : no rider is there ;  
 But its bridle is red with the sign of despair.  
 Weep, Albin !<sup>1</sup> to death and captivity led !  
 O weep ! but thy tears cannot number the dead :  
 For a merciless sword on Culloden shall wave,  
 Culloden ! that reeks with the blood of the brave.

LOCHIEL

Go, preach to the coward, thou death-telling seer !  
 Or, if gory Culloden so dreadful appear,  
 Draw, dotard, around thy old wavering sight,  
 This mantle, to cover the phantoms of fright.

WIZARD

Ha ! laugh'st thou, Lochiel, my vision to scorn ?  
 Proud bird of the mountain, thy plume shall be torn !  
 Say, rushed the bold eagle exultingly forth,  
 From his home, in the dark rolling clouds of the north ?  
 Lo ! the death-shot of foemen outspeeding, he rode  
 Companionless, bearing destruction abroad ;  
 But down let him stoop from his havoc on high !  
 Ah ! home let him speed,—for the spoiler is nigh.  
 Why flames the far summit ? Why shoot to the blast  
 Those embers, like stars from the firmament cast ?  
 'Tis the fire-shower of ruin, all dreadfully driven  
 From his eyrie, that beacons the darkness of heaven.

<sup>1</sup> The Gaelic appellation of Scotland—more particularly the Highlands.



Oh, crested Lochiel! the peerless in might,  
 Whose banners arise on the battlements' height,  
 Heaven's fire is around thee, to blast and to burn;  
 Return to thy dwelling! all lonely return!  
 For blackness of ashes shall mark where it stood,  
 And a wild mother scream o'er her famishing brood.

## LOCHIEL

False Wizard, avaunt! I have marshalled my clan,  
 Their swords are a thousand, their bosoms are one!  
 They are true to the last of their blood and their breath,  
 And like reapers descend to the harvest of death.  
 Then welcome be Cumberland's steed to the shock!  
 Let him dash his proud foam like a wave on the rock!  
 But woe to his kindred, and woe to his cause,  
 When Albin her claymore indignantly draws;  
 When her bonneted chieftains to victory crowd,  
 Clanronald the dauntless and Moray the proud,  
 All plaided and plumed in their tartan array—

## WIZARD

Lochiel, Lochiel! beware of the day;  
 For, dark and despairing, my sight I may seal,  
 But man cannot cover what God would reveal;  
 'Tis the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,  
 And coming events cast their shadows before.  
 I tell thee, Culloden's dread echoes shall ring  
 With the blood-hounds that bark for thy fugitive king.<sup>1</sup>  
 Lo! anointed by Heaven with the vials of wrath,  
 Behold, where he flies on his desolate path!  
 Now in darkness and billows, he sweeps from my sight:  
 Rise! rise! ye wild tempests, and cover his flight!  
 'Tis finished. Their thunders are hushed on the moors;  
 Culloden is lost, and my country deplores.  
 But where is the iron-bound prisoner? Where?  
 For the red eye of battle is shut in despair.  
 Say, mounts he the ocean-wave, banished, forlorn,  
 Like a limb from his country cast bleeding and torn?  
 Ah no! for a darker departure is near;  
 The war-drum is muffled, and black is the bier;  
 His death-bell is tolling: oh! mercy, dispel  
 Yon sight, that it freezes my spirit to tell!  
 Life flutters convulsed in his quivering limbs,  
 And his blood-streaming nostril in agony swims!  
 Accursed be the faggots that blaze at his feet,  
 Where his heart shall be thrown, ere it ceases to beat,  
 With the smoke of its ashes to poison the gale—

## LOCHIEL

Down, soothless insulter! I trust not the tale:  
 For never shall Albin a destiny meet,  
 So black with dishonour, so foul with retreat.  
 Though my perishing ranks should be strewed in their gore,  
 Like ocean-weeds heaped on the surf-beaten shore,

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<sup>1</sup> Prince Charles Edward Stuart, whom the Highlanders of that day regarded as their rightful king.



Lochiel, untainted by flight or by chains,  
 While the kindling of life in his bosom remains,  
 Shall victor exult, or in death be laid low,  
 With his back to the field, and his feet to the foe !  
 And leaving in battle no blot on his name,  
 Look proudly to Heaven from the death-bed of fame.

#### THE BATTLE OF THE BALTIC

The naval battle commemorated in this lyric was fought during the great struggle which England was waging against Napoleon at the beginning of this century. Copenhagen was invested by the British fleet under Admiral Gambier, and the army under Lord Cathcart, on the 16th of August, 1807. Firing began on the 2nd of September. On the 5th of September the Danes capitulated; and their fleet, consisting of 18 ships of the line, 15 frigates, 6 brigs, and 25 gunboats, fell into the hands of the English. Nelson was the hero of the naval fight, although not at that time in the chief command

Of Nelson and the North,  
 Sing the glorious day's renown,  
 When to battle fierce came forth  
 All the might of Denmark's crown,  
 And her arms along the deep proudly shone ;  
 By each gun the lighted brand,  
 In a bold determined hand,  
 And the Prince of all the land  
 Led them on.

#### II

Like leviathans afloat,  
 Lay their bulwarks on the brine ;  
 While the sign of battle flew  
 On the lofty British line :  
 It was ten of April morn by the chime ;  
 As they drifted on their path,  
 There was silence deep as death ;  
 And the boldest held his breath  
 For a time.

#### III

But the might of England flushed  
 To anticipate the scene ;  
 And her van the fleetest rushed  
 O'er the deadly space between.  
 ' Hearts of oak ! ' our captain cried ; when each gun  
 From its adamant lips  
 Spread a death-shade round the ships,  
 Like the hurricane eclipse  
 Of the sun.

#### IV

Again ! again ! again !  
 And the havoc did not slack,  
 Till a feeble cheer the Dane  
 To our cheering sent us back ;—  
 Their shots along the deep slowly boom :—  
 Then ceased—and all is wail,  
 As they strike the shattered sail ;  
 Or, in conflagration pale,  
 Light the gloom.



## V

Out spoke the victor then,  
 As he hailed them o'er the wave :  
 ' Ye are brothers ! ye are men !  
 And we conquer but to save :—  
 So peace instead of death let us bring ;  
 But yield, proud foe, thy fleet,  
 With the crews, at England's feet,  
 And make submission meet  
 To our King.'

## VI

Then Denmark blessed our chief,  
 That he gave her wounds repose ;  
 And the sounds of joy and grief  
 From her people wildly rose,  
 As death withdrew his shades from the day,  
 While the sun looked smiling bright  
 O'er a wide and woeful sight,  
 Where the fires of funeral light  
 Died away.

## VII

Now joy, Old England, raise !  
 For the tidings of thy might,  
 By the festal cities' blaze,  
 While the wine-cup shines in light ;  
 And yet amidst that joy and uproar,  
 Let us think of them that sleep,  
 Full many a fathom deep,  
 By thy wild and stormy steep,  
 Elsinore !

## VIII

Brave hearts ! to Britain's pride  
 Once so faithful and so true,  
 On the deck of fame that died ;—  
 With the gallant good Riou :<sup>1</sup>  
 Soft sigh the winds of heaven o'er their grave !  
 While the billow mournful rolls,  
 And the mermaid's song condole,  
 Singing glory to the souls  
 Of the brave !

## THE SOLDIER'S DREAM

Our bugles sang truce—for the night-cloud had lowered,  
 And the sentinel stars set their watch in the sky ;  
 And thousands had sunk on the ground overpowered,  
 The weary to sleep, and the wounded to die.

When reposing that night on my pallet of straw,  
 By the wolf-scaring faggot that guarded the slain ;  
 At the dead of the night a sweet vision I saw,  
 And thrice ere the morning I dreamt it again.

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<sup>1</sup> Captain Riou, justly entitled the gallant and the good by Lord Nelson when he wrote home his dispatches.



Methought from the battlefield's dreadful array,  
 Far, far I had roamed on a desolate track :  
 'Twas Autumn—and sunshine arose on the way  
 To the home of my fathers, that welcomed me back.

I flew to the pleasant fields traversed so oft  
 In life's morning march, when my bosom was young,  
 I heard my own mountain-goats bleating aloft,  
 And knew the sweet strain that the corn-reapers sung.

Then pledged we the wine-cup, and fondly I swore,  
 From my home and my weeping friends never to part ;  
 My little ones kissed me a thousand times o'er,  
 And my wife sobbed aloud in her fulness of heart.

Stay, stay with us—rest, thou art weary and worn ;  
 And fain was their war-broken soldier to stay ;—  
 But sorrow returned with the dawning of morn,  
 And the voice in my dreaming ear melted away.

#### EXILE OF ERIN<sup>1</sup>

There is a curious story about this poem. Its publication is stated to have given great offence in exalted quarters. Hence, when Campbell returned from the Continent he was arrested as a French spy. The magistrate who conducted the examination searched the poet's papers, and discovered the MS. of 'Ye Mariners of England'! One poem atoned for the offence caused by the other, and Campbell was at once liberated.

There came to the beach a poor exile of Erin,  
 The dew on his thin robe was heavy and chill :  
 For his country he sighed, when at twilight repairing  
 To wander alone by the wind-beaten hill.  
 But the day-star attracted his eye's sad devotion,  
 For it rose o'er his own native isle of the ocean,  
 Where once in the fire of his youthful emotion,  
 He sang the bold anthem of 'Erin go bragh !'<sup>2</sup>

'Sad is my fate !' said the heart-broken stranger ;  
 'The wild deer and wolf to a covert can flee,  
 But I have no refuge from famine and danger,  
 A home and a country remain not to me.  
 Never again, in the green sunny bowers,  
 Where my forefathers lived, shall I spend the sweet hours,  
 Or cover my harp with the wild-woven flowers,  
 And strike to the numbers of "Erin go bragh !"

'Erin, my country ! though sad and forsaken,  
 In dreams I revisit thy sea-beaten shore ;  
 But, alas ! in a far foreign land I awaken,  
 And sigh for the friends who can meet me no more !  
 Oh, cruel fate ! wilt thou never replace me  
 In a mansion of peace—where no perils can chase me ?  
 Never again shall my brothers embrace me ?  
 They died to defend me, or live to deplore !

<sup>1</sup> Anthony McCann, exiled for being implicated in the Irish Rebellion of 1798. Campbell met him at Hamburg.

<sup>2</sup> Ireland for ever.



' Where is my cabin-door, fast by the wild-wood ?  
 Sisters and sire ! did ye weep for its fall ?  
 Where is the mother that looked on my childhood ?  
 And where is the bosom-friend, dearer than all ?  
 Oh ! my sad heart ! long abandoned by pleasure,  
 Why did it dote on a fast-fading treasure ?  
 Tears, like the rain-drop, may fall without measure,  
 But rapture and beauty they cannot recall.  
  
 ' Yet all its sad recollections suppressing,  
 One dying wish my lone bosom can draw :  
 Erin ! an exile bequeaths thee his blessing !  
 Land of my forefathers ! " Erin go bragh !"  
 Buried and cold, when my heart stills her motion,  
 Green be thy fields—sweetest isle of the ocean !  
 And thy harp-striking bards sing aloud with devotion,—  
 " Erin mavournin<sup>1</sup>—Erin go bragh !" '

### YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND

#### A NAVAL ODE

##### I

Ye Mariners of England !  
 That guard our native seas ;  
 Whose flag has braved a thousand years,  
 The battle and the breeze !  
 Your glorious standard launch again  
 To meet another foe !  
 And sweep through the deep,  
 While the stormy winds do blow ;  
 While the battle rages loud and long  
 And the stormy winds do blow.

##### II

The spirits of your fathers  
 Shall start from every wave !—  
 For the deck it was their field of fame,  
 And Ocean was their grave :  
 Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell,  
 Your manly hearts shall glow,  
 As ye sweep through the deep,  
 While the stormy winds do blow ;  
 While the battle rages loud and long,  
 And the stormy winds do blow.

##### III

Britannia needs no bulwark,  
 No towers along the steep ;  
 Her march is o'er the mountain-waves,  
 Her home is on the deep.  
 With thunders from her native oak,  
 She quells the floods below,—  
 As they roar on the shore,  
 When the stormy winds do blow ;  
 When the battle rages loud and long,  
 And the stormy winds do blow.

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<sup>1</sup> Ireland, my darling.



## IV

The meteor flag of England  
 Shall yet terrific burn ;  
 Till danger's troubled night depart,  
 And the star of peace return.  
 Then, then, ye ocean-warriors !  
 Our song and feast shall flow  
 To the fame of your name,  
 When the storm has ceased to blow ;  
 When the fiery fight is heard no more,  
 And the storm has ceased to blow.

## JOHN WILSON

1785-1854

JOHN WILSON was the son of a wealthy Scottish merchant, and was born at Paisley on the 18th of May, 1785. He has been classed by some critics as ' amongst the Lake School of poets, but free from their defects.' His claim to this classification lies mainly in the fact that, after graduating at Oxford (where he had won the Newdigate prize for the best English poem of fifty lines), he went to reside in the Lake District, on the banks of Windermere. It is well known that he was attracted thither by the love that he had for Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge.

His chief poems are *The Isle of Palms* (1812) and *The City after the Plague* (1816). He also wrote a beautiful description of Highland scenery, entitled *Unimore*, in *Blackwood's Magazine*. His smaller poems are sonnets and occasional pieces. His writings are characterized by great beauty of description, exquisite tenderness of sentiment, and a fine melody and richness of expression.

In 1851 Professor Wilson was granted a pension of £300 per annum, and for many years he occupied with great distinction the chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh.

Though his first laurels were won by his poetry, yet it was as a writer of prose that he excelled most of his contemporaries. A writer in the *Quarterly Review* says : ' His poetry can never, in our opinion, take a foremost place amongst the English classics. His prose tales, *Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life*, etc., had



their day. . . . But far above all his contemporaries, and, indeed, above all writers of the same class in any age, he soars as a rhapsodist. As *Christopher North*, by the loch, or on the moors, or at Ambrose's, he is the most gifted and extraordinary being that ever wielded pen. We can compare him, when such fits are on, to nothing more aptly than to a huge Newfoundland dog, the most perfect of its kind ; or, better still, to the " Beautiful Leopard from the valley of the Palm-trees," which, in sheer wantonness and without any settled purpose, throws itself into a thousand attitudes, always astonishing and often singularly graceful.'

#### FROM LINES TO A SLEEPING CHILD

Art thou a thing of mortal birth  
Whose happy home is on our earth ?  
Does human blood with life imbue  
Those wandering veins of heavenly blue  
That stray along thy forehead fair  
Lost 'mid a gleam of golden hair ?  
Oh, can that light and airy breath  
Steal from a being doomed to death ?  
Those features to the grave be sent  
In sleep thus mutely eloquent ?  
Or art thou, what thy form would seem,  
The phantom of a blessed dream ?

#### THE EVENING CLOUD

A cloud lay cradled near the setting sun,  
A gleam of crimson tinged its braided snow :  
Long had I watched the glory moving on  
O'er the still radiance of the lake below.  
Tranquil its spirit seem'd, and floated slow !  
Even in its very motion there was rest :  
While every breath of eve that chanced to blow  
Wafted the traveller to the beauteous West.  
Emblem, methought, of the departed soul !  
To whose white robe the gleam of bliss is given ;  
And by the breath of mercy made to roll  
Right onwards to the golden gate of Heaven,  
Where, to the eye of faith, it peaceful lies,  
And tells to man his glorious destinies.



## IRISH POETS

## THOMAS MOORE

1779-1852

THOMAS MOORE was born in Dublin in the year 1779. He was the son of 'poor but respectable parents.' A Roman Catholic, he was one of the first of that creed to take advantage of the Act which opened the doors of the University of Dublin to students who were not members of the Established Church. He took his degree of B.A. in 1798, and in the following year he went to London and took chambers in the Temple in order to qualify himself for the legal profession. Mr. Shaw, who devotes more space to this Irish poet than most English writers on the history of literature in these islands, tells us that 'he had qualities to make him the darling of gay society, a great talent for conversation, an agreeable voice, with musical skill enough to give enchanting effect to his tender or passionate or patriotic songs. But his dignity of character perhaps suffered from his weakness for the frivolous triumphs of fashionable circles.' During his years of study at Trinity College, Dublin, he had made the acquaintance of Robert Emmet, whose strongly-marked character and political influence imbued the poet with revolutionary sympathies.

In 1803 Moore obtained an appointment in the Bermudas, but he was only absent from his home in England for the short space of fourteen months. He made a tour in America before he returned, and during that time wrote some of his most exquisite poems. On leaving the beautiful Western islands, he appointed a deputy to perform the duties of his office until he should return and resume them himself, but in the year 1819, when Moore was residing at Sloperton Cottage, in Wiltshire, he heard that his deputy had embezzled a large sum of money, and had absconded. This circumstance, it appears, rendered Moore himself liable to arrest. He therefore quitted England, and made up his mind to pay off the debt by means of what money he could earn by literary labours. This he was able to do only in part, but the Government were lenient, and



condoned the offence after a small proportion had been refunded. During his absence from England, which lasted from 1819 to 1822, a period of three years, he spent most of his time in Paris.

'The frightful explosion,' as Moore calls it, 'of 1798 changed his views on the subject of open rebellion, but he remained an ardent opponent of religious and political ascendancy.'

Moore is chiefly known to the world as the tuneful and patriotic author of *Irish Melodies*, a collection of about 125 songs, which were set to music by Sir John Stevenson, an eminent Irish composer. The songs, 'as regards popularity, occupied,' and we would add, *occupy*, 'a somewhat similar position in England and Ireland to that of Béranger in France.' They appeared in print periodically from 1807 to 1834. No lyrical poetry has ever surpassed these gems of song for beauty and sweetness. Indeed, to attempt to compare them with the works of any other writer of songs would be to strain after comparison where no similarity exists. The *Melodies* of Moore stand alone in their glory of cadence, fluency, and rhythm. In their loveliness the soul of the poet himself seems to be revealed, a soul full of love, patriotism, and truth. There is in them a delightful blending of the pathetic and the gay, the convivial and the serious, and the borderland of refinement is never for a moment overstepped in one of them.

In his 'Letter to the Marchioness Dowager of Donegal,' prefixed to the third number, the poet gives us a Prefatory Letter on Music which gives the student an insight into the spirit and purpose which inspired him as he wrote these lyrics. In the course of this letter the writer says :

'It has often been remarked, and oftener felt, that our music is the truest of all comments upon our history. The tone of defiance, succeeded by the languor of despondency—a burst of turbulence dying away into softness—the sorrows of one moment lost in the levity of the next—and all that romantic mixture of mirth and sadness which is naturally produced by the efforts of a lively temperament to shake off, or forget, the wrongs which lie upon it. Such are the features of our history and character, which we find strongly and faithfully reflected in our music ; and there are even many airs which it is difficult to listen to without recalling some period or event to which their expression seems peculiarly applicable. Sometimes, for instance, when the



strain is open and spirited, yet shaded here and there by a mournful recollection, we can fancy that we behold the brave allies of Montrose<sup>1</sup> marching to the aid of the royal cause, notwithstanding all the perfidy of Charles and his ministers, and remembering just enough of past sufferings to enhance the generosity of their present sacrifice. The plaintive melodies of Carolan take us back to the times in which he lived, when our poor countrymen were driven to worship their God in caves, or to quit for ever the land of their birth,—like the bird that abandons the nest which human touch has violated. In many of these mournful songs we seem to hear the last farewell of the exile, mingling regret for the ties he leaves at home with sanguine expectations of the honours that await him abroad—such honours as were won on the field of Fontenoy, where the valour of Irish Catholics turned the fortune of the day, and extorted from George II. that memorable exclamation: “Cursed be the laws which deprive me of such subjects!”

‘Though much has been said of the antiquity of our music, it is certain that our finest and most popular airs are modern; and perhaps we may look no further than the last disgraceful century for the origin of most of those wild and melancholy strains which were at once the offspring and solace of grief, and which were applied to the mind, as music was formerly to the body, “*decantare loca dolentia*.”’

‘In addition, indeed, to the power which music must always have possessed over the minds of a people so ardent and susceptible, the stimulus of persecution was not wanting to quicken our taste into enthusiasm; the charms of song were ennobled with the glories of martyrdom, and the acts against minstrels in the reigns of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth were as successful, I doubt not, in making my countrymen musicians as the penal laws have been in keeping them Catholics.

‘With respect to the verses which I have written for these melodies, as they are intended rather to be sung than read, I can answer for their sound with somewhat more confidence than their sense; yet it would be affectation to deny that I have

<sup>1</sup> There are some gratifying accounts of the gallantry of these Irish auxiliaries in *The Complete History of the Wars in Scotland under Montrose* (1660). Clarendon owns that the Marquis of Montrose was indebted for much of his miraculous success to this small band of Irish heroes under Macdonnell.



given much attention to the task, and that it is not through want of zeal or industry if I unfortunately disgrace the sweet airs of my country by poetry altogether unworthy of their taste, their energy, and their tenderness.'

Apart from the *Melodies*, which will ever retain the first place in popular favour, Moore's greatest work is *Lalla Rookh*. The plan of it is, according to the best critics, original and happy. A love-tale sets forth a description of the journey of a lovely Eastern Princess from Delhi to Bucharía, to meet her lover, who is King of the latter country. The chamberlain of the Princess, Fahladeen, supplies most of the comic element, and by his drolleries considerably lightens the description of the journey, which is otherwise relieved by the poet with the aid of a constant stream of Oriental lore and ornate details of scenery, costumes, and ceremonial. To amuse the Princess, a young poet or minstrel of Bucharía, named Feramorz, is made to sing to the accompaniment of his guitar four romantic tales in verse. As is most natural under all the circumstances, the young lady falls in love with the fascinating musician. She grows sadder and sadder at the thought of her hopeless attachment, and arrives at the home of her affianced husband a victim of increasing melancholy. But her kingly lover proves to be none other than the bard she has learned to love, and the maiden is glad in the prospect which she had feared. The four poems in *Lalla Rookh* are entitled respectively *The Veiled Prophet*, *The Fire-Worshippers*, *Paradise and the Peri*, and *The Light of the Harem*. Of these, Mr. Shaw's analysis is as follows :

'The longest and most ambitious is the first, which is written in the heroic couplet, while the others are composed in those irregular animated octosyllabics which Walter Scott and Byron brought into fashion. *The Veiled Prophet* is a story of love, fanaticism, and vengeance, founded on the career of an impostor who made his appearance in Khorassan, and after leading astray numberless dupes by a pretended miraculous mission to overthrow Mohammedanism, was at last defeated. He is, in short, a kind of Mussulman Antichrist. The betrayal of the heroine by his diabolical acts, and the voluptuous temptations by which he induces a young Circassian chieftain to join his standard, the recognition of the lovers, and the tragical death of the deceiver and his victims form the plot. Its defects are chiefly



a uniform tone of agonized and intense feeling which becomes monotonous and strained, and the want of reality in the characters, the demoniac wickedness of Mokanna being contrasted with the superhuman exaltation of love and sorrow in the lovers. Nor did Moore possess full mastery over the grave and masculine heroic versification ; and, therefore, despite the richness of the imagery and descriptions, the poet's genius is more favourably exhibited in the beautiful songs and lyrics which are interspersed, as in the scene where Azim is introduced to a foretaste of the joys of Paradise. This portion of the poem is borrowed from the half-fabulous accounts of the initiation of the celebrated sect of the Assassins.

' *The Fire-Worshippers*, also a love-story, is bound up with the cruel persecutions of the Turks of the Guebres ; but under the guise of tyrannical orthodoxy opposed to patriotic defenders of their country and their faith, Moore undoubtedly intended to typify the resistance of the Irish (Roman) Catholics to their English and Protestant oppressors. The love-adventures of Hafed, the Guebre chief, and Fatima, the daughter of the Mussulman tyrant, are not very original ; but some of the descriptions are animated and striking, in spite of a rather overstrained and too emphatic tone.

' *Paradise and the Peri* is a very graceful apologue, and the scenes in which the exiled fairy seeks the gift which is to secure her readmission to Heaven are picturesque. She successively offers as her passport the last drop of blood shed by a patriot, the dying sigh of a self-devoted lover, but these are pronounced insufficient ; at last she presents the tear of a repentant sinner, which is received. Fanciful and tender to the highest degree, the whole story has a compactness and completeness which render it very charming.

' *The Light of the Harem* is a little love-episode between " the magnificent son of Akbar " and his beautiful favourite—Nourmahal. A coldness between the lovers is terminated by a mysterious and lovely enchantress, who evokes the Spirit of Music to furnish Nourmahal with a magic wreath of flowers. This gives to the voice of its wearer such a superhuman power that when she presents herself disguised, to sing before her imperial lover at the Feast of Roses, all his former passion revives. The description of the flower-sorceress Namouna, the



invocation, and above all the exquisitely varied and highly-finished songs, afford striking examples of the graceful and musical, if somewhat fantastic and artificial, genius of Moore.'

*The Loves of the Angels* is by no means equal to the other poems of this illustrious writer in conception or workmanship. Besides these, he published *Odes on Cash, Corn, and Catholics*, *Fables for the Holy Alliance*, and a number of prose works, the chief of which is his *Life of Lord Byron*.

Of Moore's minor poems, written in his lighter and more playful mood, and consisting mainly of lampoons directed against the Tory party, Mr. Spalding speaks in the following eulogistic terms: 'Probably he is nowhere so successful as in his satirical effusions of Comic Rhyme; for in these his fanciful ideas are prompted by a wit so sharp, and expressed with a pointedness and neatness so very unusual, that it is a pity these pieces should be condemned to speedy forgetfulness, as they must be, by the temporary interest of their topics.' But, if we may be pardoned for venturing to criticise the critic himself, we would venture to say that this expression of opinion, complimentary to a portion of the poet's work and genius, is entirely inadequate to the greatness of the subject. 'There are spots upon the sun itself,' and there are flaws in the workmanship of all who are endowed with human genius, but the name of Moore will ever be identified with all that is best and sweetest in the realm of poesy, and will always stand pre-eminent in the annals of the sons of song.

#### ECHO

How sweet the answer Echo makes  
To Music at night,  
When, rous'd by lute or horn, she wakes,  
And far away o'er lawns and lakes  
Goes answering light!

Yet Love hath echoes truer far,  
And far more sweet,  
Than e'er, beneath the moonlight's star,  
Of horn or lute or soft guitar  
The songs repeat.

'Tis when the sigh, in youth sincere,  
And only then,—  
The sigh that's breath'd for one to hear,  
Is by that one, that only dear  
Breath'd back again!



## PRO PATRIA MORI

When he who adores thee has left but the name  
 Of his fault and his sorrows behind,  
 Oh, say, wilt thou weep, when they darken the fame  
 Of a life that for thee was resign'd ?  
 Yes, weep ! and however my foes may condemn,  
 Thy tears shall efface their decree ;  
 For Heaven can witness, though guilty to them,  
 I have been but too faithful to thee !

With thee were the dreams of my earliest love ;  
 Every thought of my reason was thine ;  
 In my last humble prayer to the Spirit above,  
 Thy name shall be mingled with mine !  
 Oh, blest are the lovers and friends who shall live  
 The days of thy glory to see ;  
 But the next dearest blessing that Heaven can give  
 Is the pride of thus dying for thee !

## BEAUTY

Oh, what a pure and sacred thing  
 Is Beauty, curtained from the sight  
 Of the gross world, illumining  
 One only mansion with her light !  
 Unseen by man's disturbing eye—  
 The flower that blooms beneath the sea,  
 Too deep for sunbeams, doth not lie  
 Hid in more chaste obscurity. . . .  
 A soul, too, more than half divine,  
 Where, through some shades of earthly feeling,  
 Religion's softened glories shine,  
 Like light through summer foliage stealing,  
 Shedding a glow of such mild hue,  
 So warm, and yet so shadowy too,  
 As makes the very darkness there  
 More beautiful than light elsewhere.

## TO LORD VISCOUNT STRANGFORD

ABOARD THE 'PHÆTON' FRIGATE, OFF THE AZORES, BY MOONLIGHT

Sweet Moon ! if, like Crotona's sage,<sup>1</sup>  
 By any spell my hand could dare  
 To make thy disk its ample page,  
 And write my thoughts, my wishes there !  
 How many a friend, whose careless eye  
 Now wanders o'er that starry sky,  
 Should smile, upon thy orb to meet  
 The recollection kind and sweet,  
 The reveries of fond regret,  
 The promise, never to forget,  
 And all my heart and soul would send  
 To many a dear-loved, distant friend.

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<sup>1</sup> Pythagoras, who was supposed to have a power of writing upon the moon by means of a magic mirror.



How little, when we parted last  
 I thought those pleasant times were past,  
 For ever past, when brilliant joy  
 Was all my vacant heart's employ :  
 When, fresh from mirth to mirth again,  
 We thought the rapid hours too few ;  
 Our only use for knowledge then  
 To gather bliss from all we knew.  
 Delicious days of whim and soul !  
 When, mingling lore and laugh together,  
 We lean'd the book on Pleasure's bowl,  
 And turn'd the leaf with Folly's feather.  
 Little I thought that all were fled,  
 That, ere that summer's bloom was shed,  
 My eye should see the sail unfurl'd  
 That wafts me to the western world.

And yet, 'twas time ;—in youth's sweet days,  
 To cool that season's glowing rays,  
 The heart awhile, with wanton wing,  
 May dip and dive in Pleasure's spring ;  
 But, if it wait for winter's breeze,  
 The spring will chill, the heart will freeze.  
 And then, that Hope, that fairy Hope,—  
 Oh ! she awak'd such happy dreams,  
 And gave my soul such tempting scope  
 For all its dearest, fondest schemes,  
 That not Verona's child of song,  
 When flying from the Phrygian shore,  
 With lighter heart could bound along,  
 Or pant to be a wand'rer more !

Even now delusive hope will steal  
 Amid the dark regrets I feel,  
 Soothing, as yonder placid beam  
 Pursues the murmurers of the deep,  
 And lights them with consoling gleam,  
 And smiles them into tranquil sleep.  
 Oh ! such a blessed night as this,  
 I often think, if friends were near,  
 How we should feel, and gaze with bliss  
 Upon the moon-bright scenery here !  
 The sea is like a silvery lake,  
 And, o'er its calm the vessel glides  
 Gently, as if it fear'd to wake  
 The slumber of the silent tides.  
 The only envious cloud that lowers,  
 Hath hung its shade on Pico's height,  
 Where dimly, 'mid the dusk, he towers  
 And scowling at this heav'n of light,  
 Exults to see the infant storm  
 Cling darkly round his giant form !

\* \* \* \* \*

But hark !—the boatswain's pipings tell  
 'Tis time to bid my dream farewell :  
 Eight bells—the middle watch is set ;  
 Good-night, my Strangford !—ne'er forget  
 That, far beyond the western sea  
 Is one whose heart remembers thee.



## THE JOURNEY ONWARDS

As slow our ship her foamy track  
 Against the wind was cleaving,  
 Her trembling pennant still look'd back  
 To that dear Isle 'twas leaving.  
 So loth we part from all we love,  
 From all the links that bind us ;  
 So turn our hearts, as on we rove,  
 To those we've left behind us !

When, round the bowl, of vanish'd years  
 We talk with joyous seeming,—  
 With smiles that might as well be tears,  
 So faint, so sad their beaming ;  
 While mem'ry brings us back again  
 Each early tie that twined us,  
 Oh, sweet's the cup that circles then  
 To those we've left behind us !

And when, in other climes, we meet  
 Some isle or vale enchanting,  
 Where all looks flow'ry, wild and sweet,  
 And nought but love is wanting ;  
 We think how great had been our bliss  
 If Heav'n had but assign'd us  
 To live and die in scenes like this,  
 With some we've left behind us !

As trav'lers oft look back at eve  
 When eastward darkly going,  
 To gaze upon that light they leave  
 Still faint behind them glowing,—  
 So, when the close of pleasure's day  
 To gloom hath near consign'd us,  
 We turn to catch one fading ray  
 'Of joy that's left behind us.

## LINES ON THE DEATH OF SH—R—D—N

' Principibus placuisse viris !'—HORAT.

Yes, grief will have way—but the fast-falling tear  
 Shall be mingled with deep execrations on those  
 Who could bask in that Spirit's meridian career,  
 And yet leave it thus lonely and dark at its close :—

Whose vanity flew round him, only while fed  
 By the odour his fame in its summer-time gave ;  
 Whose vanity now, with quick scent for the dead,  
 Like the Ghoul of the East, comes to feed at his grave.

Oh ! it sickens the heart to see bosoms so hollow  
 And spirits so mean in the great and high-born ;  
 To think what a long line of titles may follow  
 The relics of him who died—friendless and lorn !



How proud they can press to the fun'ral array  
 Of one whom they shunn'd in his sickness and sorrow !  
 How bailiffs may seize his last blanket to-day,  
 Whose pall shall be held up by nobles to-morrow !

And thou, too, whose life, a sick epicure's dream,  
 Incoherent and gross, even grosser had pass'd,  
 Were it not for that cordial and soul-giving beam  
 Which his friendship and wit o'er thy nothingness cast :

No, not for the wealth of the land that supplies thee  
 With millions to heap upon Foppery's shrine ;—  
 No, not for the riches of all who despise thee,  
 Though this would make Europe's whole opulence mine ;—

Would I suffer what—ev'n in the heart that thou hast—  
 All mean as it is—must have consciously burn'd,  
 When the pittance, which shame had wrung from thee at last,  
 And which found all his wants at an end, was return'd !<sup>1</sup>

' Was *this*, then, the fate '—future ages will say,  
 When *some* names shall live but in history's curse ;  
 When Truth will be heard, and these lords of a day  
 Be forgotten as fools, or remembered as worse—

' Was this, then, the fate of that high-gifted man,  
 The pride of the palace, the bow'r, and the hall,  
 The orator—dramatist—minstrel,—who ran  
 Through each mode of the lyre, and was master of all ;—

' Whose mind was an essence, compounded with art  
 From the finest and best of all other men's pow'rs—  
 Who ruled, like a wizard, the world of the heart,  
 And could call up its sunshine, or bring down its show'rs ;—

' Whose humour, as gay as the fire-fly's light,  
 Play'd round every subject, and shone as it play'd ;—  
 Whose wit, in the combat, as gentle as bright,  
 Ne'er carried a heart-stain away on its blade ;—

' Whose eloquence—bright'ning whatever it tried,  
 Whether reason or fancy, the gay or the grave—  
 Was as rapid, as deep, and as brilliant a tide  
 As ever bore Freedom aloft on its wave !

Yes—such was the man, and so wretched his fate ;—  
 And thus, sooner or later, shall all have to grieve,  
 Who waste their morn's dew in the beams of the Great,  
 And expect 'twill return to refresh them at eve !

In the woods of the North there are insects that prey  
 On the brain of the elk till his very last sigh ;<sup>2</sup>  
 Oh, Genius ! thy patrons, more cruel than they,  
 First feed on thy brains, and then leave thee to die !

<sup>1</sup> The sum was two hundred pounds—*offered* when Sh-r-d-n could no longer take any sustenance, and declined for him by his friends.

<sup>2</sup> Naturalists have observed that, upon dissecting an elk, there were found in its head some *large* flies, with its brain almost eaten away by them.  
 —*History of Poland*.



## O THE SHAMROCK !

Through Erin's Isle,  
 To sport awhile,  
 As Love and Valour wander'd,  
 With Wit, the sprite,  
 Whose quiver bright  
 A thousand arrows squander'd ;  
 Where'er they pass,  
 A triple grass<sup>1</sup>  
 Shoots up, with dew-drops streaming  
 As softly green  
 As emeralds seen  
 Through purest crystal gleaming.  
 O the Shamrock, the green, immortal Shamrock !  
     Chosen leaf  
     Of Bard and Chief,  
 Old Erin's native Shamrock !

Says Valour, ' See,  
     They spring for me,  
 Those leafy gems of morning !'  
 Says Love, ' No, no,  
     For *me* they grow,  
 My fragrant path adorning.'  
     But Wit perceives  
     The triple leaves,  
 And cries, ' Oh' ! do not sever  
     A type that blends  
     Three godlike friends,  
     Love, Valour, Wit, for ever !'  
 O the Shamrock, the green, immortal Shamrock !  
     Chosen leaf  
     Of Bard and Chief,  
 Old Erin's native Shamrock !

So firmly fond  
 May last the bond  
 They wove that morn together,  
 And ne'er may fall  
 One drop of gall  
 On Wit's celestial feather !  
 May Love, as twine  
 His flowers divine,  
 Of thorny falsehood weed 'em !  
 May Valour ne'er  
 His standard rear  
 Against the cause of Freedom !  
 O the Shamrock, the green, immortal Shamrock !  
     Chosen leaf  
     Of Bard and Chief,  
 Old Erin's native Shamrock !

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<sup>1</sup> Saint Patrick is said to have made use of that species of trefoil to which in Ireland we give the name of shamrock in explaining the doctrine of the Trinity to the pagan Irish. Hope, among the ancients, was sometimes represented as a beautiful child, 'standing upon tip-toes, and a trefoil, or three-coloured grass, in her hand.'



## THE ORIGIN OF THE HARP

'Tis believ'd that this Harp, which I wake now for thee,  
Was a Siren of old, who sung under the sea ;  
And who often, at eve, through the bright waters rov'd,  
To meet, on the green shore, a youth whom she lov'd.

But she lov'd him in vain, for he left her to weep,  
And in tears, all the night, her gold tresses to steep ;  
Till Heav'n look'd with pity on true love so warm,  
And chang'd to this soft Harp the sea-maiden's form.

Still her bosom rose fair—still her cheeks smil'd the same—  
While her sea-beauties gracefully form'd the light frame ;  
And her hair, as, let loose, o'er her white arm it fell,  
Was chang'd to bright chords, utt'ring melody's spell.

Hence it came, that this soft Harp so long hath been known  
To mingle love's language with sorrow's sad tone ;  
Till *thou* didst divide them, and teach the fond lay  
To speak love when I'm near thee, and grief when away !

## LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM

Oh ! the days are gone, when Beauty bright  
My heart's chain wove ;  
When my dream of life, from morn till night,  
Was love, still love.  
New hope may bloom,  
And days may come  
Of milder, calmer beam,  
But there's nothing half so sweet in life  
As love's young dream :  
No, there's nothing half so sweet in life  
As love's young dream.

Though the bard to purer fame may soar,  
When wild youth's past ;  
Though he win the wise, who frown'd before,  
To smile at last ;  
He'll never meet  
A joy so sweet,  
In all his noon of fame,  
As when first he sung to woman's ear  
His soul-felt flame,  
And, at every close, she blush'd to hear  
The one lov'd name.

No,—that hallow'd form is ne'er forgot  
Which first love trac'd ;  
Still it lingering haunts the greenest spot  
On memory's waste.  
'Twas odour fled  
As soon as shed ;  
'Twas morning's wing'd dream ;  
'Twas a light, that ne'er can shine again  
On life's dull stream :  
Oh ! 'twas light that ne'er can shine again  
On life's dull stream.



RICH AND RARE WERE THE GEMS SHE WORE<sup>1</sup>

Rich and rare were the gems she wore,  
 And a bright gold ring on her wand she bore ;  
 But oh ! her beauty was far beyond  
 Her sparkling gems or snow-white wand.

' Lady, dost thou not fear to stray,  
 So lone and lovely, through this bleak way ?  
 Are Erin's sons so good or so cold,  
 As not to be tempted by woman or gold ?'

' Sir Knight ! I feel not the least alarm,  
 No son of Erin will offer me harm :—  
 For, though they love woman and golden store,  
 Sir Knight ! they love honour and virtue more.'

On she went, and her maiden smile  
 In safety lighted her round the Green Isle ;  
 And blest for ever is she who relied  
 Upon Erin's honour and Erin's pride.

DESMOND'S SONG<sup>2</sup>

By the Feal's wave benighted,  
 Not a star in the skies,  
 To thy door by Love lighted,  
 I first saw those eyes.  
 Some voice whisper'd o'er me,  
 As the threshold I crost,  
 There was ruin before me :  
 If I lov'd, I was lost.

Love came, and brought sorrow  
 Too soon in his train ;  
 Yet so sweet, that to-morrow  
 'Twere welcome again.  
 Though misery's full measure  
 My portion should be,  
 I would drain it with pleasure,  
 If pour'd out by thee.

<sup>1</sup> This ballad is founded upon the following anecdote : 'The people were inspired with such a spirit of honour, virtue, and religion by the great example of Brien, and by his excellent administration, that as a proof of it we are informed that a young lady of great beauty, adorned with jewels and a costly dress, undertook a journey alone, from one end of the kingdom to the other, with a wand only in her hand, at the top of which was a ring of exceeding great value ; and such an impression had the laws and government of this monarch made on the minds of all the people, that no attempt was made upon her honour, nor was she robbed of her clothes or jewels.'—WARNER'S *History of Ireland*, vol. i., bk. x.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas, the heir of the Desmond family, had accidentally been so engaged in the chase that he was benighted near Tralee, and obliged to take shelter at the Abbey of Feal, in the house of one of his dependents, called MacCormac. Catherine, a beautiful daughter of his host, instantly inspired the Earl with a violent passion, which he could not subdue. He married her, and by this inferior alliance alienated his followers, whose brutal pride regarded this indulgence of his love as an unpardonable degradation of his family.—*Leland*, vol. ii.



You who call it dishonour  
 To bow to this flame,  
 If you've eyes, look but on her,  
 And blush while you blame.  
 Hath the pearl less whiteness  
 Because of its birth ?  
 Hath the violet less brightness  
 For growing near earth ?

No—Man, for his glory,  
 To ancestry flies ;  
 While Woman's bright story  
 Is told in her eyes.  
 While the monarch but traces  
 Through mortals his line,  
 Beauty, born of the Graces,  
 Ranks next to Divine !

#### THEY KNOW NOT MY HEART

They know not my heart, who believe there can be  
 One stain of this earth in its feelings for thee ;  
 Who think, while I see thee in beauty's young hour,  
 As pure as the morning's first dew on the flow'r,  
 I could harm what I love—as the sun's wanton ray  
 But smiles on the dew-drop to waste it away !  
 No—beaming with light as those young features are,  
 There's a light round thy heart which is lovelier far :  
 It is not that cheek—'tis the soul dawning clear  
 Through its innocent blush makes thy beauty so dear ;  
 As the sky we look up to, though glorious and fair,  
 Is look'd up to the more, because Heaven is there !

#### GO WHERE GLORY WAITS THEE

Go where glory waits thee,  
 But while fame elates thee,  
 Oh ! still remember me.  
 When the praise thou meetest  
 To thine ear is sweetest,  
 Oh ! then remember me.  
 Other arms may press thee,  
 Dearer friends caress thee,  
 All the joys that bless thee,  
 Sweeter far may be ;  
 But when friends are nearest,  
 And when joys are dearest,  
 Oh ! then remember me.

When at eve thou rovest  
 By the star thou lovest,  
 Oh ! then remember me.  
 Think, when home returning,  
 Bright we've seen it burning,  
 Oh ! thus remember me  
 Oft as summer closes,  
 When thine eye reposes  
 On its ling'ring roses.  
 Once so lov'd by thee,  
 Think of her who wove them,  
 Her who made thee love them,  
 Oh ! then remember me.



When, around thee dying,  
 Autumn leaves are lying,  
   Oh ! then remember me.  
 And, at night, when gazing  
 On the gay hearth blazing,  
   Oh ! still remember me.  
 Then, should music, stealing  
 All the soul of feeling,  
 To thy heart appealing,  
   Draw one tear from thee ;  
 Then let memory bring thee  
 Strains I us'd to sing thee,—  
   Oh ! then remember me.

### ARCHBISHOP TRENCH

1807-1886

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH was born in Dublin. His father, Richard Trench, was a brother of the first Lord Ashtown, whose ancestors settled in Ireland in 1631. His mother was a granddaughter of Richard Chenevix Trench, Bishop of Waterford, whose grandfather took refuge in England after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Thus the family was, in part, of French extraction.

The future Archbishop was born on the 5th of September, 1807. He was educated at Twyford, near Winchester, and afterwards at Harrow, where his poetical compositions drew attention to him as a pupil of great promise. In 1825 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge. During his college life he and some friends, under the leadership of Frederick Denison Maurice, formed themselves into a society which they called 'The Apostles.' These students conducted the *Athenæum* at the time, and Trench was a contributor to its pages.

In the year 1829, having just left Cambridge, he went on the Continent. Bishop Wilberforce wrote of him in after-years, 'He has a soldier's heart under his cassock,' and he gave proof of the truth of this assertion by joining a number of Cambridge friends in an expedition which they undertook 'intent on carrying out a generous but foolhardy scheme of giving liberty to Spain.' But the attempt proved a miserable failure, and Trench just escaped with his life. Had he remained behind he would probably have shared the fate of General Torrijos and



his followers, including Robert Boyd, a friend of Trench. All of these were overtaken by the Spanish guardships, and were put to death by military execution without any trial.

In 1832 he was ordained by the Bishop of Norwich, and worked for some time at Hadleigh, under the Rev. Hugh James Rose, at whose house, in 1833, the meeting took place which gave rise to the 'Tracts for the Times.' On being ordained priest, he took charge of the parish of Curdridge, near Southampton. It was here that he is said to have been asked by a parishioner whom he was visiting if he had ever tasted birch wine, to which query he feelingly replied: 'No, but I have tasted the birch-rod.'

In 1835 Trench's first and favourite book appeared. It was a volume of poems entitled *Justin Martyr and Other Poems*. During his incumbency of Curdridge he published his *Notes on the Parables of our Lord*, a book which was recognised at once 'as coming from a master in Israel.' In subsequent years we find him examining chaplain to the Bishop of Oxford, and (in 1846) Professor of Divinity in King's College, London. In 1848 he produced a collection of the *Best Latin Hymns and Other Sacred Latin Poetry, Selected and Arranged for the Use of Members of the Church*. 'Specially noteworthy is it that the favourite hymn, *Jerusalem the Golden*, is a translation of one of the hymnal rhythms in this book, and that Trench was the writer that called it from its long oblivion.' In the years between 1852 and 1862 appeared those books on the study of words which established his reputation as an etymologist, and gave a new impetus to the pursuit of a branch of knowledge which had been much neglected.

In 1856 Trench was appointed to the Deanery of Westminster, a position which was very congenial to his tastes. In the Advent of 1857 he opened the Abbey for service on Sunday evenings, an innovation which has since become an established custom. On the death of Archbishop Whately in 1863, he was made Archbishop of Dublin, his consecration taking place in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, on the 1st of January, 1864. 'What impressed me so deeply,' wrote an eye-witness, 'was the countenance itself—its utter unself-consciousness, its deep humility, its intense devotion, its almost divine spirituality.' It was during his archiepiscopate that the Irish Church was disestab-



lished, but, as he himself put it, he stuck to the ship, even when it was 'among the breakers.'

The end of the earthly scene came on Sunday, the 28th of March, 1886, and on the following Friday, in the presence of a multitude of mourners, he was laid to rest beneath the sacred floor of Westminster Abbey, amid a great company of the illustrious dead. He had, like the Poet-Laureate in his *Crossing the Bar*, himself depicted such a scene in his last poem, *Timoleon*, published in 1881 :

And there shall wait on me  
\* \* \* \* \*

The golden tribute of a people's love ;  
And when my work is ended, multitudes,  
Apparelled all in white and crowned with flowers  
As for a great day of high festival,  
Shall with large tears of sorrow and of joy  
Bear me a victor to my funeral pyre :  
So limns itself the future to my sight.

At one period in his career—just before he went to the Continent—Trench was face to face with what he called 'the riddle of existence.' He was rather tired of himself and of the world. He thus describes the frame of mind :

I loved,  
With others whom a like disquietude  
At the like crisis of their lives now kept  
Restless, to question to and fro,  
And to debate the evil of the world  
As though we bore no portion of that ill,  
As though with subtle phrases we could spin  
A woof to screen us from life's undelight :  
Sometimes prolonging far into the night  
Such talk, as loath to separate and find,  
Each in his solitude, how vain are words  
When that which is opposed to them is more.

\* \* \* \* \*

Full of rebellious askings for what end  
And by what power, without our own consent  
Caught in this snare of life we know not how,  
We were placed here, to suffer and to sin,  
To be in misery and know not why.

[ Later, after the foolish escapade in Spanish waters, he came to his senses, and experienced the more lasting consolations

Of hope and joy, of life and death  
And immortality through faith ;  
Of that great change commenced within ;  
The Blood that cleanses from all sin,  
That can wash out the inward stain  
And consecrate the heart again ;



The voice that clearer and more clear  
 Doth speak unto the purgèd ear ;  
 The gracious influences given  
 In a continued stream from heaven ;  
 The balm that can the soul's hurt heal,  
 The Spirit's witness and its seal.

His description of a poet is an inspiration which poets would do well to lay firmly to heart. He describes him as

A counsellor well fitted to advise  
 In daily life, and at whose lips no less  
 Men may inquire or nations, when distress  
 Of sudden doubtful danger may arise ;  
 Who, though his head be hidden in the skies,  
 Plants his firm foot upon our common earth,  
 Dealing with thoughts which everywhere have birth.  
 This is the poet, true of heart and wise,  
 No dweller in a baseless world of dreams,  
 Which is not earth nor heaven.

Trench resembles Wordsworth in his didactic verse. He had, indeed, come under the influence of the greater poet. The resemblance between the two writers is strikingly displayed in the poem *A Walk in a Churchyard*. It has been said that 'in the arrangement of the sonnet he displayed a mastery equal to that of the Italian writers.' Some of his sonnets, such as that on *Prayer*, for example, are amongst the best in the English language. We will close our sketch of the Archbishop by quoting the lines which he himself considered to be his best :

Life bears us on,  
 And yet not so but that there may survive  
 Something to us ; sweet odours reach us yet,  
 Brought sweetly from the fields long left behind,  
 Of holy joy or sorrow holier still :  
 As I remember when, long years ago,  
 With the companions of my youth I rode  
 'Mid Sicily's holm oaks and pastoral dells  
 All in the flowery Spring, through fields of thyme,  
 Fields of all flowers—no lovelier Enna knew—  
 There came to us long after, blown from these,  
 Rich odours that pursued us many a mile,  
 Embalming all the air : so rode we on,  
 Though we had changed our verdant meadow-paths  
 For steep rough tracks up dusty river-beds,  
 Yet haunted by that odorous fragrance still.

Then let us be content in spirit, though  
 We cannot walk as we are fain to do  
 Within the solemn shadow of our griefs  
 For ever : but must needs come down again  
 From the bright skirts of those protecting clouds  
 To tread the common paths of earth anew.



Then let us be content to leave behind us  
 So much ; which yet we leave not quite behind,  
 For the bright memories of the holy dead,  
 The blessed ones departed, shine on us  
 Like the pure splendour of some clear large star  
 Which pilgrims, travelling onward, at their backs  
 Leave, and at every moment see not now ;  
 Yet, whensoever they list, may pause and turn  
 And with its glories gild their faces still.

## MINOR POETS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

### ENGLISH POETS

*Samuel Rogers* (1763-1855) was born at Newington Green, a suburb of London. He was educated privately, and was placed in his father's banking-house while quite a youth. He subsequently rose to be a nominal partner in the concern. He was very wealthy, and was therefore able to devote himself to literature and 'the society of men distinguished in politics, literature, and art.' He was enabled, also, 'to enrich his house in St. James's Place with some of the finest and rarest pictures, busts, books, gems, and other articles of virtue, and to entertain his friends with a generous and unostentatious hospitality. . . . It is gratifying to add that his bounty soothed and relieved the death-bed of Sheridan, and was exerted to a large extent annually in behalf of suffering or unfriended talent.' His chief works are *The Pleasures of Memory* (1792); *Human Life* (1819); *Italy* (1822), and *Jacqueline*, a tale published in conjunction with Byron's *Lara*, in 1814. His first appearance was in 1786, as author of an *Ode to Superstition, with Some Other Poems*. He was 'a careful and fastidious writer.' He says, in his *Table Talk*, 'I was engaged for nine years on *The Pleasures of Memory*; on *Human Life* for nearly the same space of time; and *Italy* was not completed in less than sixteen years.'

Rogers was a wit, and his sayings have often been quoted in proof of this fact. It is said that on one occasion he tried to



extort a confession from Sir Philip Francis that he was the author of the letters of *Junius*, but Francis snubbed him, and Rogers afterwards remarked that if he was not *Junius*, he was at least *Brutus*.

FROM 'THE PLEASURES OF MEMORY'

Twilight's soft dews steal o'er the village green,  
With magic tints to harmonize the scene.  
Stilled is the hum that through the hamlet broke,  
When round the ruins of their ancient oak  
The peasants flocked to hear the minstrel play,  
And games and carols closed the busy day.  
Her wheel at rest, the matron thrills no more  
With treasured tales and legendary lore.  
All, all are fled ; nor mirth nor music flows  
To chase the dreams of innocent repose.  
All, all are fled ; yet still I linger here !  
What secret charms this silent spot endear !

*Charles Lamb* (1775-1834) was born in comparatively humble circumstances. He was educated, however, at Christ's Hospital, and at an early age entered the field of literature. He was originally intended for the ecclesiastical profession, but an impediment in his speech prevented this project from being carried out, and he had to content himself with a clerkship in the East India Company's service. His devotion to his sister, to one of whose fits of insanity their mother had fallen a victim, forms the most beautiful trait in his character. He was a great friend and admirer of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was his schoolfellow. He is chiefly remembered as the author of the famous *Essays of Elia* and the tales compiled by himself and his sister from the plays of Shakespeare, but his first compositions were in verse. His tragedy, *John Woodvil*, which appeared in 1801, was mercilessly criticised in the *Edinburgh Review*, though there is much in it that is excellent. In 1830 he published a volume of poems, entitled *Album Verses*, which contains some meritorious pieces. His best-known poem is entitled *Old Familiar Faces*.

I have had playmates, I have had companions,  
In my days of childhood, in my joyful schooldays,  
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

*The Hon. and Very Rev. William Herbert* (1778-1847), who eventually became Dean of Manchester, published, in 1806, a series of translations from the Norse, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese. He also wrote an original poem entitled *Helga*,



which gives a description of Scandinavian history and customs. In 1838 he published an epic poem called *Attila*, which was 'founded on the establishment of Christianity by the discomfiture of the mighty attempt of the Gothic King to establish a new antichristian dynasty upon the wreck of the temporal power of Rome at the end of the term of 1,200 years, to which its duration had been limited by the forebodings of the heathens.'

How oft, at midnight, have I fixed my gaze  
Upon the blue unclouded firmament,  
With thousand spheres illumined ; each perchance  
The powerful centre of revolving worlds !

*Bishop Reginald Heber* (1783-1826) was born at Malpas, in Cheshire, and educated at Brasenose College, Oxford. In 1802 he obtained the prize for Latin hexameters, his subject being *Carmen Seculare*. In 1803 he turned his attention to English verse, and wrote *Palestine*, which is held to be the best prize-poem the University of Oxford has ever produced. The story is told how, before reciting it in the Sheldonian Theatre, Heber read the poem to Sir Walter Scott, who was then on a visit to the University. Sir Walter said that one striking circumstance connected with the building of Solomon's Temple had escaped the notice of the young poet, namely, the fact that no tools were used in its construction. Heber thereupon retired to a corner of the room, and in a few minutes came back with the lines which have since become famous :

No hammer fell, no ponderous axes rung ;  
Like some tall palm the mystic fabric sprung.  
Majestic silence !

He graduated B.A. in 1805, and obtained the prize for the best English essay the same year. He became a Fellow of All Souls, and soon after travelled in Germany and Russia. He graduated M.A. on his return, and in 1809 published a poem entitled *Europe, or Lines on the Present War*. He was presented soon afterwards to the Rectory of Hodnet, where he remained until, in 1823, he was appointed Bishop of Calcutta. After an important journey to Travancore, the Bishop was found dead one day in his bath. Besides the *Bampton Lectures* of 1815 and a *Life of Jeremy Taylor* which he published in 1822, Heber was the author of a number of beautiful poems, chiefly religious in tone. The most popular



of these is the missionary hymn, *From Greenland's Icy Mountains*, which alone would have made its author famous.

FROM 'PALESTINE'

Reft of thy sons, amid thy foes forlorn,  
Mourn, widowed queen ! Forgotten Sion, mourn !  
Is this thy place, sad city, this thy throne,  
Where the wild desert rears its craggy stone ?  
While suns unblest their angry lustre fling,  
And wayworn pilgrims seek the scanty spring ?  
Where now thy pomp, which kings with envy viewed ?  
Where now thy might, which all those kings subdued ?

*James Henry Leigh Hunt* (1784-1859), the son of a West Indian who resided in the United States of America, was born at Southgate, in the county of Middlesex. He was educated at Christ's Hospital, but was obliged to leave in his fifteenth year for a peculiar reason, which he thus explains : ' I was then first deputy Grecian, and had the honour of going out of the school in the same rank, at the same age, and for the same reason as my friend Charles Lamb. The reason was that I hesitated in my speech. It was understood that a Grecian was bound to deliver a public speech before he left school, and to go into the Church afterwards ; and as I could do neither of these things a Grecian I could not be.' Hunt had written some respectable poems even at this early age, and his father published them, having first secured a large number of subscribers. In 1805 his brother started a paper called *The News*, for which James wrote dramatic criticisms, and in 1808 the two joined in editing *The Examiner*, which became immensely and deservedly popular. But, unfortunately, James was led in an unguarded moment to libel the Regent by referring to him as ' a fat Adonis of fifty,' and for this indiscretion he had to serve a term of imprisonment. The two years spent in confinement were the happiest of his life. He was visited by Charles Lamb, Moore, Byron, and other congenial spirits, besides being allowed to decorate his room to an extent which made him almost childishly proud of the result. On his release he published *The Story of Rimini*, an Italian tale in verse (1816). In 1822 he went to Italy, and was associated with Byron and Shelley in the editing of *The Liberal*. But Shelley died, and the two remaining poets quarrelled. Two other volumes of poetry, entitled respectively *Foliage* and *The Feast of the Poets*, had been published. Hunt was a prolific writer of prose as well as of verse. During his later



years he was endowed by the Crown with a pension of £200. Of all Leigh Hunt's poems perhaps the best known is a short one of eighteen lines, entitled *About Ben Adhem and the Angel*, which is included in almost every book of popular recitations.

#### FROM 'A DIRGE'

Blest is the turf, serenely blest,  
Where throbbing hearts may sink to rest,  
Where life's long journey turns to sleep,  
Nor ever pilgrim wakes to weep.

*Bryan Waller Procter* (1790-1874), better known as 'Barry Cornwall,' was a native of London, and was educated at Harrow, where he enjoyed the friendship of Lord Byron. He was called to the Bar, and became one of the Commissioners in Lunacy. He first appeared as a poet in 1815, when a small volume of *Dramatic Scenes* appeared, written 'in order to try the effect of a more natural style than that which had for a long time prevailed in our dramatic literature.' The venture proved a complete success. He subsequently published three volumes of poems—*A Sicilian Story*, *Marcian Colonna*, and *The Flood of Thessaly* (1823). Other works of his include *Effigies Poeticæ* and *English Songs* (1832). 'He ranks,' says Mr. Shaw, 'as one of the most impersonal of our poets, being especially fond of identifying himself with emotions and situations to which his actual nature was least akin. Of this propensity the most popular of his English songs, *The Sea! the Sea! the Open Sea!* is an amusing illustration, for he hated the sea. His tragedy of *Mirandola* was acted at Covent Garden in 1821.

#### KING DEATH

King Death was a rare old fellow,  
He sat where no sun could shine,  
And he lifted his hand so yellow,  
And poured out his coal-black wine.  
Hurrah for the coal-black wine!

There came to him many a maiden  
Whose eyes had forgot to shine,  
And widows with grief o'erladen,  
For a draught of his coal-black wine.  
Hurrah for the coal-black wine!

The scholar left all his learning,  
The poet his fancied woes,  
And the beauty, her bloom returning,  
Like life to the fading rose.  
Hurrah for the coal-black wine!



All came to the rare old fellow,  
 Who laughed till his eyes dropped brine,  
 And he gave them his hand so yellow,  
 And pledged them in Death's black wine.  
 Hurrah for the coal-black wine !

*Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (1828-1882) was a native of London, though of foreign extraction, being the elder son of an Italian exile and half-English mother. He was distinguished alike as a painter and as a poet. He helped to found what is known in the artistic world as the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. In 1850 he founded a periodical called *The Germ*, which was to be the organ or mouthpiece of the Brotherhood. This venture was not a success, and came to an end abruptly with the fourth issue. But it served the purpose of bringing Rossetti into prominence as a poet. *The Blessed Damozel* and *Sister Helen* have been much admired. In 1861 appeared a volume of translations entitled *The Early Italian Poets from Ciullo d'Alcamo to Dante Alighieri* (1100-1200-1300), in the original metres, together with Dante's 'Vita Nuova.' In 1870 he published a volume of *Poems*, nearly all of which are 'in form and colour, subject and style of treatment, similar to the pre-Raphaelite pictures.' These poems reached a second edition the same year. In 1881 a second volume appeared entitled *Ballads and Sonnets*. In this the sonnets form a sequence called *The House of Life*. It is quite possible that, when the verdict of time has been arrived at, Dante Gabriel Rossetti may take a high rank amongst the writers of English poetry. His father, Mr. G. Rossetti, was Professor of Italian at King's College, London, and the author of a commentary on Dante, after whom he doubtless called his son. The poet's daughter, Christina Gabriela Rossetti, has earned a high reputation for her poems.

FROM 'THE BLESSED DAMOZEL'

The blessed damozel leaned out  
 From the gold bar of heaven ;  
 Her eyes were deeper than the depth  
 Of waters stilled at even ;  
 She had three lilies in her hand,  
 And the stars in her hair were seven.

\* \* \* \*

From the fixed place of heaven she saw  
 Time like a pulse shake fierce  
 Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove  
 Within the gulf to pierce  
 Its path ; and now she spoke as when  
 The stars sang in their spheres.



*William Taylor* (1765-1836) was one of the first to translate German poetry into English. A translation of Bürger's *Lenore* appeared in 1796. It impressed Sir Walter Scott so much that he made an attempt to outdo it, but he could not beat Taylor's version. A collection of works was issued in 1830, entitled *A Survey of German Poetry*. A writer in the *Quarterly Review* says: 'Mr. Taylor must be acknowledged to have been the first who effectually introduced the modern poetry and drama of Germany to the English reader, and his versions of the *Nathan* of Lessing, the *Iphigenia* of Goethe, and Schiller's *Bride of Messina*, are not likely to be supplanted, though none of them are of the same order with Coleridge's *Wallenstein*.'

*William Sotheby* (1757-1833) was born in London. He received his education at Harrow, and entered the army. He retired from the service in 1780, and followed literature as a profession. His principal works are *A Poetical Description of Wales* (1789), a translation of the *Georgics* of Virgil, and *Constance de Castille*. The two latter were published in 1800 and 1810 respectively. He also translated the *Iliad* in 1831, and the *Odyssey* in 1832. Much praise has been bestowed upon his translation of Wieland's *Oberon*. His poetical works include a poem written in 1799 in commemoration of the Battle of the Nile, a poem in blank verse entitled *Saul*, etc. He is also to be counted amongst the English dramatists as the author of a play called *Julian and Agnes*, which, though Mrs. Siddons took part in it, was a failure.

*Edward Hovell, Lord Thurlow* (1781-1829), was the author of several small volumes of poems, which, though sometimes lacking in taste, are not without sterling merit. *Select Poems* appeared in 1821, and was followed by *Poems on Several Occasions; Arcita and Palamon, after Chaucer; Angelica; or, The Fate of Proteus; etc.* He wrote some sonnets.

*Edwin Atherstone* (1788-1872) was the author of two poems in blank verse entitled *The Last Days of Herculanæum* (1821) and *The Fall of Nineveh* (1828). The subjects are treated with a considerable amount of skill, though here and there may be found traces of unnecessary gloom and extravagant bombast.

*The Rev. William Lisle Bowles* (1762-1850) was born at King's Sutton, on the borders of Northamptonshire. He was educated



at Westminster School and at Tirnity College, Oxford. In 1805 he was presented to the living of Bremhill, in Wiltshire, then a valuable benefice. He was the author of *The Village Verse-Book*, *The Missionary of the Andes* (1815), *Days Departed* (1828), *St. John in Patmos* (1833), and other poetical works. He 'delighted and inspired' the genius of Coleridge, and also influenced the works of Southey and Wordsworth. The first of his publications was a volume of sonnets published in 1789. In 1805 this collection, which had been added to from time to time, had reached its ninth edition.

*The Right Hon. John Hookham Frere* (1769-1846), who had charge of British affairs in Spain under General Sir John Moore, was the author of a curious poetical production with the prosaic title of *A Prospectus and Specimen of an Intended National Work, by William and Robert Whistlecraft, of Stowmarket in Suffolk, Harness and Collar Makers. Intended to comprise the most Interesting Particulars relating to King Arthur and his Round Table*. It turned out to be 'a happy imitation of the Pulci and Casti school of Italian poetry.' Lord Byron professes to have modelled his Venetian story of *Beppo* 'on or after the excellent manner of Mr. Whistlecraft.' Writing to Mr. Murray concerning *Beppo*, he says: 'It has politics and ferocity. Whistlecraft is my immediate model, but Berni is the father of that kind of writing; which, I think, suits our language, too, very well.' To John Hookham Frere, therefore, according to Lord Byron, must be accorded the credit of having introduced the *Bernesque* style into our poetry. The stanza in which he wrote is called *ottava rima*, and is that adopted by Byron in *Beppo* and *Don Juan*. This is the first verse of the Whistlecraft effusion:

I've often wished that I could write a book,  
 Such as all English people might peruse;  
 I never should regret the pains it took,  
 That's just the sort of fame that I should choose:  
 To sail about the world like Captain Cook,  
 I'd sling a cot up for my favourite Muse,  
 And we'd take verses out to Demerara,  
 To New South Wales, and up to Niagara.

The whole work is now deservedly forgotten. Mr. Frere was educated at Eton, and while there composed a clever war-song which was admired by Sir Walter Scott. A collection of this poet's works was published in 1871.



*Matthew Gregory Lewis* (1775-1818) was born in London. He was educated at Westminster School, where he evinced a strong taste for theatrical performances. He went to Oxford, but left after a short while, and proceeded to Germany to study modern languages. He is best known as the author of a romance entitled *The Monk*, in which his most successful efforts in verse are to be found.

FROM 'ALONZO THE BRAVE AND THE FAIR IMOGENE'

A warrior so bold, and a virgin so bright,  
 Convers'd as they sat on the green ;  
 They gazed on each other with tender delight :  
 Alonzo the Brave was the name of the knight—  
 The maiden's, the Fair Imogene.

*The Hon. William Robert Spencer* (1770-1834) was the author of a number of fugitive poems of the kind known as *vers de société*. His works were collected and published in 1835. A notable poem is that on *Beth Gêlert* ; or, *The Grave of the Greyhound*, the story of which is too well known to need recapitulation.

*Henry Luttrell* (1770-1851) was one of the brilliant circle who used to meet at Holland House in its best days. He was the author of *Advice to Julia : a Letter in Rhyme* (1820), and *Crockford House* (1827). He was a witty and graceful conversationalist.

*Dr. Frank Sayers* (1763-1817) was a native of Norwich, and a member of the medical profession. He published *Dramatic Sketches of the Ancient Northern Mythology*, in 1790 ; *Disquisitions, Metaphysical and Literary*, in 1793 ; *Nugæ Poeticæ*, in 1803 ; *Miscellanies*, in 1805 ; and other works. His collected works were reissued by William Taylor, in 1823. Southey admitted that even in 1826 Sayers was 'out of date.'

*Helen Maria Williams* (1762-1827), a prolific writer in prose and verse, published her collected poems in 1823. The volume contains a pretty sonnet on *Hope*, to which this note is attached : 'I commence the sonnets with that to Hope, from a predilection in its favour, for which I have a proud reason : it is that of Mr. Wordsworth, who lately honoured me with his visits while at Paris, having repeated it to me from memory after a lapse of many years.'



## SONNET TO HOPE

Oh, ever skilled to wear the form we love !  
 To bid the shapes of fear and grief depart ;  
 Come, gentle Hope ! with one gay smile remove  
 The lasting sadness of an aching heart.  
 Thy voice, benign enchantress ! let me hear ;  
 Say that for me some pleasures yet shall bloom,  
 That Fancy's radiance, Friendship's precious tear,  
 Shall soften, or shall chase, misfortune's gloom.  
 But come not glowing in the dazzling ray,  
 Which once with dear illusions charmed my eye,  
 Oh, strew no more, sweet flatterer ! on my way  
 The flowers I fondly thought too sweet to die ;  
 Visions less fair will soothe my pensive breast,  
 That asks not happiness, but longs for rest.

George Canning (1770-1827), the great statesman whose history is so well known to every student, was the author of some remarkable poems, which he contributed to the *Anti-Jacobin Review*. They include some clever parodies on Southey and Darwin, a satire on French principles entitled *New Morality*, etc. All are full of genuine fun and pungent wit. He also contributed a great part of *The Rovers*, a burlesque on the sentimental German drama, his *Song by Rogers* being one of his sprightliest. It begins :

Whene'er with haggard eyes I view  
 This dungeon that I'm rotting in,  
 I think of those companions true  
 Who studied with me at the U—  
     niversity of Gottingen,  
     niversity of Gottingen.

The well-known lines—

So down thy hill, romantic Ashborne, glides  
 The Derby-Dilly, carrying three insides

—occur in a parody on Darwin's *Loves of the Plants*, entitled *Loves of the Triangles*. Canning, moreover, could write serious poetry with a master hand, as is proved by his pathetic *Epitaph on his Son*.

Thomas James Matthias (died in 1835) was the author of some poetical works which are now almost entirely forgotten. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he graduated in 1774. A ripe scholar, he translated several English poems into Italian, and wrote some Latin odes. He wrote also some *Runic Odes, imitated from the Norse Tongue* ; a satirical poem entitled *The Shade of Alexander Pope* (1798) ; and a richly annotated poem entitled *Pursuits of Literature*.



*Letitia Elizabeth Landon* (1802-1838) contributed a large number of poems to various journals over the initials 'L. E. L.' She was born in Chelsea, her father being an army agent. She married, in 1838, a Mr. George Maclean, who was Governor of the Gold Coast. She ended her days by taking prussic acid. Her last verses are written about the Pole Star, which, in her voyage to Africa, she had watched each night until it sank below the horizon.

*Jane* (1783-1824) and *Ann* (1782-1866) *Taylor* were the daughters of an engraver named Isaac Taylor, whose wife had achieved some distinctions in the field of literature. The two sisters were born in London, but were brought up at Lavenham, in Suffolk. They became contributors to an annual called *The Minor's Pocket-Book*, conducted by Messrs. Darton and Harvey, who asked them to make a volume of verses for children. Consequently they were able, in 1803, to issue a volume entitled *Original Poems for Infant Minds*, which was followed, in 1806, by *Rhymes for the Nursery*. Later there appeared *Hymns for Infant Minds*, *Rural Scenes*, *City Scenes*, and other works. The two best-known pieces in these collections are the popular poem entitled *My Mother*, and the verses beginning 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star.'

*The Rev. Robert Montgomery* (1808-1855) was a popular preacher at Percy Chapel, Bedford Square, London. He published a volume of poems which passed through several editions. Lord Macaulay has handled him very roughly in one of his celebrated essays, but there is beauty in Montgomery's poems for all that. His chief poems are *The Omnipresence of the Deity*; *Satan*; *Messiah*; *Oxford*; and *Luther*. The following lines will give an idea of his style :

Ye quenchless stars ! so eloquently bright,  
Untroubled sentries of the shadowy night,  
While half the world is lapped in downy dreams,  
And round the lattice creep your midnight beams,  
How sweet to gaze upon your placid eyes,  
In lambent beauty looking from the skies !

*Ebenezer Elliott* (1781-1847) was the son of an iron-founder who lived at Masborough, in Yorkshire. He was the author of *Corn Law Rhymes*, which were published between 1830 and 1836. He was essentially a poet of the working classes, and his



talents were of such an order that 'though sometimes leading him beyond the limits of good taste, they claimed the recognition of Southey, Bulwer, Wilson, and Thomas Carlyle. Two lines of his are worth quoting :

What is a Communist ? One who has yearnings  
For equal division of unequal earnings.

*Thomas Haynes Bayly* (1797-1839) is considered to be, next to Thomas Moore, the most successful song-writer of the nineteenth century. He was the son of a solicitor at Bath, and studied for a while at Oxford, but did not take a degree. The best known of his songs are *She wore a Wreath of Roses ; I'd be a Butterfly ; Oh, no ! we never mention Him ; The Soldier's Tear ;* and *We met—'twas in a Crowd*. He was unfortunate in the later years of his life, and died of jaundice.

*Noel Thomas Carrington* (1777-1830) was a native of Devonshire. He was the author of two volumes of poetry in which he sings the praises of his native county. His best poem is entitled *Dartmoor*, which was published in 1826. *The Banks of Tamar* and *My Native Village* are also worthy of mention. One of his poems is on *The Pixies of Devon*, concerning whom Mr. Drew, in his work on Cornwall, says : 'The age of pixies, like that of chivalry, is gone. There is, perhaps, scarcely a house which they are reputed to visit. Even the fields and lanes which they formerly frequented seem to be nearly forsaken. Their music is rarely heard ; and they appear to have forgotten to attend their ancient midnight dances.'

*The Venerable Francis Wrangham* (1769-1843) was Rector of Hunmanby and Archdeacon of Chester. He wrote a prize poem on the *Restoration of the Jews* in 1795, and four Seaton prize poems on religious subjects. He also edited Langhorne's Plutarch, and was the author of various translations from Greek and Latin authors. 'His macaronic verses, or sportive classical effusions among his friends, were marked by fine taste and felicitous adaptation.'

*The Rev. Henry Francis Carey* (1772-1844) was a classical scholar of Christ Church, Oxford, and very learned in English, French, and Italian literature. He published a translation of the *Inferno* of Dante, in blank verse, in 1805, and a translation



of the *Divina Commedia* in 1814. He also translated the *Birds* of Aristophanes and the *Odes* of Pindar. He was for some time Assistant-Librarian in the British Museum.

*William Stewart Rose* (1775-1843), the second son of George Rose, Treasurer of the Navy, was educated at Eton and Cambridge. He became Reading Clerk to the House of Lords. In 1803 he translated *Amadis de Gaul*, and in 1823 he published an abridged translation of the *Orlando Innamorato* of Boiardo, and in 1831 he completed his best-known work, a translation of the *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto. He also published a volume of poems entitled *The Crusade of St. Louis* in 1810, with other occasional works, such as sonnets, etc.

*The Earl of Ellesmere* (1800-1857) was the author of a translation of Goethe's *Faust* and Schiller's *Song of the Bell*. He translated *Hernani; or, The Honour of a Castilian*, a tragedy by Victor Hugo, in 1830, and was the author of a volume entitled *Translations from the German, and Original Poems*, which appeared in 1824. He was a son of the first Duke of Sutherland. His original poetry is not very notable, though it sometimes rises above mediocrity.

*Thomas Mitchell* (1783-1845) translated Aristophanes into English verse. He also edited some of the plays of Sophocles.

*Viscount Strangford* (1780-1855) was British Ambassador at Lisbon and other foreign Courts. He published a volume of *Poems from the Portuguese of Camoens, with Remarks on his Life and Writings*, in 1803. Byron attacked him in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, though Moore, on the other hand, dedicated an epistle to him.

*Hartley Coleridge* (1796-1849), the eldest son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, was born at Clevedon, and educated at Merton College, Oxford. He went to London in 1818, and became a contributor to the *London Magazine*. As a poet he is celebrated chiefly for his sonnets, which are remarkably fine, and have been adjudged by critics to be second only to those of Milton and Wordsworth. He also wrote *Essays, Lives of the Northern Worthies*, etc. He died at Ambleside in 1849. The poetry of Coleridge is 'of the



school of Wordsworth.' It is unequal in merit, but much of it will live. The following is a typical sonnet by Hartley Coleridge :

TO SHAKESPEARE

The soul of man is larger than the sky,  
Deeper than ocean—or the abysmal dark  
Of the unfathomed centre. Like that ark,  
Which in its sacred hold uplifted high,  
O'er the drowned hills, the human family,  
And stock reserved of every living kind ;  
So, in the compass of a single mind,  
The seeds and pregnant forms in essence lie,  
To make all worlds. Great Poet ! 'twas thy art  
To know thyself, and in thyself to be  
Whate'er love, hate, ambition, destiny,  
Or the firm fatal purpose of the heart  
Can make of man. Yet thou wert still the same,  
Serene of thought, unhurt by thy own flame.

Mrs. Caroline Southey (1787-1854) was the daughter of Captain Charles Bowles. She lost her parents while still a child, and was left to the care of a nurse, to whom she refers affectionately in her works. On the 5th of June, 1839, she married Robert Southey, the poet, one of whose poems, *Robin Hood*, she completed. Mrs. Southey's best-known poem is a lyric entitled *The Pauper's Deathbed*, but she was the author of several volumes of poetry, including *Ellen Fitz-Arthur* (1820), *The Widow's Tale, and Other Poems* (1822), and *Solitary Hours, Prose and Verse* (1826). She was the poet's second wife. *The Pauper's Deathbed* begins thus :

Tread softly—bow the head—  
In reverent silence bow—  
No passing-bell doth toll,  
Yet an immortal soul  
Is passing now.

And ends thus :

The sun eternal breaks—  
The new immortal wakes—  
Wakes with his God.

Henry Gally Knight (1786-1846) was the author of 'some Eastern tales in the measure and manner of Byron,' which, however, 'failed in exciting attention.' They are *Ildirim, a Syrian Tale* (1816); *Phrosyne, a Grecian Tale* (1817); and *Alashtar, an Arabian Tale* (1817). These poems, though unsuccessful, are not without merit. They have been acknowledged to possess 'poetical taste and correctness in the delineation of Eastern manners.'



*John Clare* (1793-1864), the son of pauper parents, was born at Helpstone, near Peterborough. He was self-educated, and succeeded, in 1820, in selling a collection of his poems to Messrs. Taylor and Hessey for £20. It was duly published with the title *Poems descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery, by John Clare, a Northamptonshire Peasant*. It brought him 'a small fortune.' Several noblemen patronized him, and he was endowed by them with a pension of £30 a year. In 1821 a second volume appeared, entitled *The Village Minstrel, and Other Poems*. His verses are full of charm.

#### WHAT IS LIFE ?

And what is life ? An hourglass on the run,  
A mist retreating from the morning sun,  
A busy, bustling, still repeated dream.  
Its length ? A minute's pause, a moment's thought.  
And Happiness ? A bubble on the stream,  
That in the act of seizing shrinks to nought.

*James* (1775-1839) and *Horace* (1779-1849) *Smith* were voluminous writers. James was a contributor to the *London Review* and the *Monthly Mirror*. It was in the *Monthly Mirror* that, in the year 1812, the series of poems known as the *Rejected Addresses* appeared. The directors of Drury Lane Theatre had offered a prize for the best prologue for the opening of the new play-house. The two brothers thereupon spent six weeks composing a number of humorous pieces professing to be the work of the most eminent poets of the day. James wrote the imitations of Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, Crabbe, and Cobbett, while Horace was the author of those of Johnson, Scott, Moore, and others. James wrote little besides, but Horace wrote a number of other works in poetry and prose.

*Bernard Barton* (1784-1849) was commonly known as 'The Quaker Poet.' He was the author of a volume of poems entitled *Metrical Effusions*, which appeared in 1812; *Napoleon, and Other Poems* (1822); *Poetic Vigils* (1824); and *Devotional Verses* (1826). A critic, writing in the *Edinburgh Review*, says of Barton's works: 'The staple of the whole poems is description and meditation—description of quiet home scenery, sweetly and feelingly wrought out—and meditation overshadowed with tenderness and exalted by devotion.'



## TO THE EVENING PRIMROSE

Fair flower, that shunn'st the glare of day,  
 Yet lov'st to open, meekly bold,  
 To evening's hues of sober gray,  
 Thy cup of paly gold ;

Be thine the offering owing long  
 To thee, and to this pensive hour,  
 Of one brief tributary song,  
 Though transient as thy flower.

*The Very Rev. Henry Hart Milman* (1791-1868) was the youngest son of Sir Francis Milman, Bart., President of the College of Physicians. He was born in London, and educated at Eton and Brasenose College, Oxford. He won the Newdigate Prize for a poem on *Apollo Belvedere*. In 1815 he wrote *Fazio, a Tragedy*, and in 1818 he published *Samor*, a religious epic founded on the legendary history of Britain, and *The Fall of Jerusalem*, a dramatic poem. *The Martyr of Antioch* appeared in 1821. He became Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1821.

*Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd* (1795-1854) was a native of Reading. He was made a judge in 1840, and died on the bench whilst in the act of addressing a grand jury at Stafford in 1854. He is best remembered as the author of *Ion*, a very able tragedy. Other tragedies by him are *The Athenian Captive*, *The Massacre of Glencoe*, and *The Castilian*. He also wrote some prose works. Talfourd stands very high as a modern dramatic poet, his characters being drawn with great power.

*John Edmund Reade* (died in 1870) was the author of *The Broken Heart, and Other Poems* (1825), *Cain the Wanderer and the Revolt of the Angels* (1830), *Italy* (1838), *Catiline* and *The Deluge* (1839), *Sacred Poems* (1843), and other volumes of prose and poetry. *Italy*, which is written in the Spenserian stanza, resembles *Childe Harold* a little. Other poems by this author have been compared to the works of Wordsworth and Ben Jonson.

*Winthrop Mackworth Praed* (1802-1839) was educated at Eton and at Trinity College, Cambridge. He was a Member of Parliament, and for a short time, in the year 1835, held the office of Secretary of the Board of Control. During his school-days he started a paper called *The Etonian*, which he ran in



conjunction with a schoolfellow—afterwards the Rev. John Moultrie—who also was a poet. Praed contributed verses to *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*, for which Lord Macaulay also wrote. His poems were collected and published in 1844 by an American publisher. They are of a 'fashionable' character, and are, to quote the words of Mr. Shaw, 'some of the most remarkable that have appeared in modern times.'

*David Macbeth Moir* (1798–1851) was a contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine*. His poetical works were published in two volumes, in 1852, by Thomas Aird. He wrote under the signature of the Greek letter Delta. His works include *Domestic Verses* (1843) and *Sketches of the Poetical Literature of the Past Half Century* (1851). He was born at Musselburgh, where he subsequently practised as a surgeon.

*The Rev. John Moultrie* (1799–1874), as above mentioned, was associated with Mackworth Praed in conducting *The Etonian*. He eventually became Rector of Rugby. He was a contributor to *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*, and published two volumes of verse, entitled *My Brother's Grave, and Other Poems* (1837), and *The Dream of Life, and Other Poems* (1843). The Rev. Derwent Coleridge, one of his fellow-students, has written a memoir of this poet in a complete edition of his works, published in 1876.

*The Hon. Mrs. Norton* (1808–1877) was a grand-daughter of Richard Brinsley Sheridan. In her nineteenth year she married the Hon. George Norton, son of the first Lord Grantley, but the union was an unhappy one and was dissolved in 1840. In 1877 she married Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, and died in June of the same year. At seventeen she wrote *The Sorrows of Rosalie*, a poem, which was published in 1829. In 1831 she published another poem, entitled *The Undying One*, and in 1840 *The Dream, and Other Poems*. In 1845 appeared *The Child of the Islands*, a poem intended to draw the attention of the Prince of Wales to the condition of the people, and in 1850 *Tales and Sketches in Prose and Verse*. She also published some novels and other prose works. Her poetry at times rises to a high level.

*Thomas K. Hervev* (1804–1859) was a native of Manchester. He was for some years editor of *The Athenæum* and a contributor



to various other journals. He was the author of *Australia, and Other Poems* (1824); *The Poetical Sketch-Book* (1829); *The English Helicon*, etc. *The Convict Ship* is one of his best-known poems.

*Alaric A. Watts* (1799-1864) was born in London. He was editor of *The Literary Souvenir* (1824-1834); and of the *Cabinet of Modern Art* (1835-1838). A pension of £300 a year was accorded to him in 1853. He published *Poetical Sketches* in 1822, and *Lyrics of the Heart* in 1850.

*Richard Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton* (1809-1885), was educated by private tutors and at Trinity College, Cambridge. He represented Pontefract in Parliament from 1837 to 1863, and was raised to the Peerage by Lord Palmerston. He died suddenly at Vichy. *Poems of Many Years* appeared in 1838, and *Collected Poetical Works* in 1876. *Poetry for the People* was published in 1840, and *Poems, Legendary and Historical*, in 1844. He also published a number of works in prose, including a biography of Keats. Lord Houghton's poetry is of a very superior kind, and was very popular in his own day.

*Francis St. Clair Erskine, Earl of Rosslyn* (1833-1890), was educated at Oxford, where he graduated M.A. He was a son of James Alexander, third Earl, a General in the army, and became an Ambassador Extraordinary to the King of Spain in 1878. He also held the office of High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. His *Sonnets and Poems*, edited by W. Earl Hodgson, were published in 1889. The volume is dedicated, by permission, to Her Majesty Queen Victoria.

*Philip James Bailey* (1816-1902), son of the historian of Nottinghamshire, Thomas Bailey, was the author of *Festus* (1839). This poem is not likely to be forgotten for one thing: it possesses the doubtful distinction of being the longest in the English language, being twice the length of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and containing no less than 55,000 lines. It contains amongst them an occasional gem like this:

We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;  
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.  
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives  
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.



The poem was written when its author was twenty-four years of age, and was much admired by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. It reached the eleventh edition in 1889. He died in 1902, at the age of eighty-six. He published *The Angel World* in 1850, *The Mystic* in 1855, and *The Universal Hymn*, 1867.

*Thomas Cooper* (1805-1892) was known as 'The Chartist Poet.' He was born at Leicester, and was apprenticed to a shoemaker at Gainsborough. He taught himself Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and French, and at the age of twenty-three became a schoolmaster and Methodist preacher. In 1841 he became leader of the Leicester Chartists, and was imprisoned soon afterwards in Stafford gaol for sedition. There he wrote *The Purgatory of Suicides*, a poem in the Spenserian stanza, and *Wise Saws and Modern Instances*, a series of tales. He was also the author of some novels.

*Eliza Cook* (1818-1889) was the daughter of a London tradesman. She was from an early age a contributor to magazines, and issued volumes of poetry in 1838, 1864, and 1865. She conducted *Eliza Cook's Journal* from 1849 to 1854, and obtained a pension of £100 in 1864.

*Sydney Dobell* (1824-1874), who wrote under the *nom de plume* of 'Sydney Yendys,' was born at Cranbrook, in Kent. His father was a wine-merchant near Cheltenham, and in the uncongenial atmosphere of the counting-house Sydney cultivated the Muse with much success. His first and best poem is *The Roman*, published in 1850. It has been alternately praised and ridiculed. *Balder* and *England in Time of War* were issued between 1850 and 1856. Some of his work was written in conjunction with Alexander Smith.

*Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton* (1803-1873), the great novelist, was also a poet. He was educated at Cambridge, where he won the Chancellor's gold medal for a poem on *Sculpture*. He also published *Ishmael, and Other Poems* in 1829. He was the third son of General William Earle Bulwer, of Wood Dalling and Heydon Hall, Norfolk. He assumed the name of Lytton after that of Bulwer in 1844.

*Edward Robert, Earl Lytton* (1831-1891), was educated at Harrow and at Bonn. He was a poet, diplomatist, and states-



man. He was Viceroy of India from 1876 to 1880. In 1887 he was sent as Ambassador to Paris, where he died. His *nom de plume* was 'Owen Meredith.' He published several volumes of poetry—*Clytemnestra*, a dramatic poem (1855); *The Wanderer* (1859); *Lucile*, a novel in verse (1860); *Fables in Song* (1874), etc.

*Richard Hengist Horne* (1803–1884) was educated at Sandhurst. He joined the Mexican naval service, and took part in the fighting at Vera Cruz and elsewhere. After passing safely through many perils he returned to England and devoted himself to literature. He published his celebrated epic *Orion* in 1843, at the low price of one farthing per copy, to show his contempt for the public that would not buy poetry. He also published other books, in one of which, *A New Spirit of the Age*, he was helped by Elizabeth Barrett Browning. In 1852 he went to the Australian goldfields, and returned in 1869. He died at Margate in 1884.

*Matthew Arnold* (1822–1888) was the eldest son of the great Dr. Arnold, Headmaster of Rugby. He was born at Laleham, near Staines, and was educated at Winchester, Rugby, and Balliol College, Oxford. He graduated with honours in 1844, and was the next year elected a fellow of Oriel. He was Inspector of Schools from 1851 to 1886, and Professor of Poetry at Oxford from 1857 to 1867. His poetical works include *The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems*, published anonymously; *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems* (1853); and *Poems* (1854). He has been ranked as a poet with Lord Lytton, and is described as 'a classic and elaborate versifier, but without the energy and fire of the true poet.' He was an Hon. LL.D. of Oxford and Edinburgh. Lord Coleridge said of Matthew Arnold, 'Few souls ever passed away with more hopes of acceptance; few lives more unstained have been led from childhood to old age.'

*William Makepeace Thackeray* (1811–1863), the great novelist, was, like Dickens and Kingsley, secondarily a poet. The following verse is from *The Ballad of Bouillabaisse*:

There is a street in Paris famous,  
For which no rhyme our language yields,  
Rue Neuve des Petits Champs its name is—  
The New Street of the Little Fields;  
And here's an inn, not rich and splendid,  
But still in comfortable case;  
The which in youth I oft attended,  
To eat a bowl of Bouillabaisse.



*Thomas Lovell Beddoes* (1803-1849) was an author of 'spectral and gruesome' verse, which was much admired by Robert Browning. He was the author of some verses in early life which failed to attract attention, and is now remembered as the writer of two works which were not published until after his death. These are entitled *Death's Jest-Book* (1850), and *Poems* (1851).

*The Rev. Charles Kingsley* (1819-1875) was unquestionably one of the most remarkable men of his time. He was distinguished as a novelist, poet, theologian, and philanthropist. He was the son of a Hampshire squire who took Holy Orders late in life and became Rector of Clovelly, and afterwards of St. Luke's, Chelsea. The son became Rector of Clovelly and Canon of Westminster. To speak of his literary work at large would be, as in the case of Thackeray and Dickens, outside the scope of our present work, but his poetry is worthy of mention. In 1848 he appeared as a dramatic poet, issuing *The Saint's Tragedy*, a story of Elizabeth of Hungary, and in 1858 he published *Andromeda, and Other Poems*. His best-known poem is the lovely lyric (which is now a popular song) entitled *Three Fishers went Sailing out into the West*.

*The Rev. Isaac Williams* (1802-1865) was a tutor and Fellow of Trinity, Oxford, and later in life a parochial clergyman. He was influenced greatly by the Oxford Movement, and wrote poetry which has been described as 'full of tenderness and pathetic sweetness.'

Love is like the ocean  
Ever fresh and strong,  
Which the world surrounding,  
Keeps it green and young.

*The Rev. Frederick William Faber* (1814-1863), like Isaac Williams, was a poet of the Oxford Movement. He was born in Yorkshire, and educated at University College, Oxford, of which he became Fellow. He was a friend of Wordsworth, who, on his acceptance of a living, said 'England loses a poet.' Faber eventually followed Newman into the Roman fold. He may be accounted one of the finest hymn-writers England has produced, many of his hymns displaying great tenderness of thought, combined with simplicity of language. *Souls of men! why will ye scatter?* is looked upon as one of the best hymns in the language.



*The Rev. Richard Barham* (1788-1845) was the author of a famous collection of poems known as *The Ingoldsby Legends*, which he contributed to *Bentley's Miscellany* under the name of 'Thomas Ingoldsby.' The legends are very popular, and often extremely humorous, but, of course, as poetry they do not rise to a very high level.

*The Very Rev. Henry Alford* (1810-1871) was born in London. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he gained a Fellowship in 1834. In 1857 he became Dean of Canterbury. He was the author of *School of the Heart, and Other Poems, Chapters of the Greek Poets*, etc. He was also the author of some very popular hymns, one of the best known being the harvest hymn, *Come, ye thankful people, come!*

*Arthur Hugh Clough* (1819-1861), the son of a cotton merchant, was born at Liverpool. He was a man of noble character, and greatly admired by the most eminent amongst his contemporaries, Lord Tennyson amongst the number. He wrote *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich* (1848), *Amours de Voyage* (1849), and *Dipsychus* (1850). Matthew Arnold wrote a glowing tribute to his memory in the poem *Thyrsis*.

*Adelaide Ann Procter* (1825-1864) was a daughter of 'Barry, Cornwall,' and the author of a number of beautiful poems. *Legends and Lyrics* appeared in 1858, and was so successful that a second series was issued in 1862. The larger number of her poems appeared at first in *Household Words*. The best known are *The Lost Chord*, which has become a very popular song, and *Per pacem ad lucem*.

#### NOW

Rise! for the day is passing,  
 And you lie dreaming on;  
 The others have buckled their armour,  
 And forth to the fight have gone:  
 A place in the ranks awaits you,  
 Each man has some part to play;  
 The Past and the Future are nothing  
 In the face of the stern To-day.

*The Rev. Robert Stephen Hawker* (1803-1875) was for forty-one years Vicar of Morwenstrow, in Cornwall. He was the author of eight volumes of verse of a somewhat eccentric kind. Among



them were *The Quest of the Sangraal* (1864) and *Cornish Ballads, and Other Poems* (1869). Amongst his works is the ballad *And shall Trelawney die?*

*The Rev. William Barnes* (1801-1886) was known as 'The Dorsetshire Poet.' He was born in the Vale of Blackmore, and was at first a lawyer's clerk, then a schoolmaster, and finally, at the age of forty-six, took Holy Orders. He became Rector of Winterbourne Came, in his native county. At intervals he issued his *Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect*, which bid fair to take rank as classics of their kind, and have received almost the unanimous commendation of critics. Mr. Shaw says: 'They consist of some hundred of pieces, severally purporting to afford glimpses of life and landscape in Dorset, and delightful to all lovers of such life most of them are.'

*Sir Henry Taylor* (1800-1886) was for many years a valuable servant of the Crown in the Colonial Office. He was the only son of George Taylor, and was born at Wilton Hall, in the county of Durham. In the field of literature he is chiefly known as a dramatist, but his poetry is of a very elevated tone. Amongst his writings may be mentioned *The Eve of the Conquest, and Other Poems* (1847); *A Sicilian Summer, and Minor Poems* (1868). His first productions in verse were *Isaac Commenus* (1832) and *Philip van Artevelde* (1834), both dramas.

*John Addington Symonds* (1840-1893) was celebrated as a poet, historian, and critic. He was educated at Oxford, where he obtained a Fellowship at Magdalen College. Failing health necessitated his going to live at Davos-platz, in Switzerland, where he studied and wrote for sixteen years. He published *Sketches and Studies*, on Dante, the Greek poets, etc., as well as works on the *Renaissance in Italy* (1875-1886) and *Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama* (1884).

*Charles Dickens* (1812-1870), like Thackeray and Charles Kingsley, must be reckoned amongst the poets. An interesting volume of his collected pieces, including some not previously printed, has recently been published by Messrs. Chapman and Hall. It is edited by Mr. F. G. Kitton, with biographical notes.



Perhaps the prettiest of his pieces is that entitled *The Ivy Green*, from *Pickwick Papers*.

#### THE IVY GREEN

Oh, a dainty plant is the Ivy Green,  
That creepeth o'er ruins old !  
Of right choice food are his meals I ween,  
In his cell so lone and cold.  
The wall must be crumbled, the stone decayed,  
To pleasure his dainty whim :  
And the mouldering dust that years have made,  
Is a merry meal for him.  
Creeping where no life is seen,  
A rare old plant is the Ivy green.

Fast he stealeth on, though he wears no wings,  
And a staunch old heart has he.  
How closely he twineth, how tight he clings,  
To his friend the huge Oak Tree !  
And slyly he traileth along the ground,  
And his leaves he gently waves,  
As he joyously hugs and crawleth round  
The rich mould of dead men's graves.  
Creeping where grim death has been,  
A rare old plant is the Ivy green.

Whole ages have fled and their works decayed,  
And nations have scattered been ;  
But the stout old Ivy shall never fade,  
From its hale and hearty green.  
The brave old plant in its lonely days,  
Shall fatten upon the past :  
For the stateliest building man can raise,  
Is the Ivy's food at last.  
Creeping on, where time has been,  
A rare old plant is the Ivy green.

*Jean Ingelow* (1830–1897), poetess and novelist, was born in the county of Suffolk. Much of her poetry is of a religious tone, but she also wrote some excellent ballads. *Poems* appeared in 1862, and went through fourteen editions in five years. *A Story of Doom, and Other Poems* followed in 1867. She died at Kensington in 1897.

*Charles Stuart Calverley* (1833–1884) was a 'curious character and rare parodist.' He wrote *Verses and Translations*, which appeared in 1862, and *Fly Leaves*, published in 1872. His humour is frequently irresistible.

*Emily Brontë* (1819–1848) was the second of the three famous sisters of that name. She is chiefly celebrated as the author of *Wuthering Heights*, a novel of singular power, but she also wrote verses which have not been without admirers.



*Dora Greenwell* (1821-1882) was the author of some poetical works of some merit, of which the best is *Carmina Crucis* (1869).

*Mrs. Amelia Opie* (1769-1853) was more celebrated as a novelist than she was as a poet, but in 1802 she published a volume of poems which, though simple in treatment and manner, are excellent in tone.

*Charles Dibdin* (1745-1814) is best known now as the author of *Tom Bowling*, the ever-popular song, though he is said to have written over a thousand sea-songs. He was an actor and dramatist. He had two sons, Charles and Thomas, also dramatists and writers of songs, but of an inferior sort.

*John Collins* was one of the proprietors of the *Birmingham Daily Chronicle*, and the author of a song called *In the Downhill of Life*. He died in 1808.

*Herbert Knowles* (1798-1817) was born at Canterbury. He was the author of a religious poem written in the churchyard of Richmond, Yorkshire. It was published by Southey in an article contributed by him to the *Quarterly Review*.

*Charles Swain* (1803-1874) was a native of Manchester. His works include *Metrical Essays* (1827); *The Mind, and Other Poems* (1831); *Dramatic Chapters, Poems, and Songs* (1847); *English Melodies* (1849); and *Songs and Ballads* (1868).

*The Rev. Henry Francis Lyte* (died in 1847) was the author of *Tales in Verse* (1830); *Poems, Ballads, etc.* He wrote some beautiful hymns, amongst them the ever-popular *Abide with me, fast falls the eventide*.

*Sir Francis H. C. Doyle* (1810-1888), Professor of Poetry at Oxford, was the author of *The Loss of the Birkenhead* and *The Return of the Guards*, both popular poems.

*The Rev. George Rundle Prynne* (1818-1903) was for fifty-five years Vicar of St. Peter's, Plymouth. He published a collection of his poetical works under the title of *The Soldier's Dying Vision, and Other Poems*. But it is as a hymn-writer that he appealed to



the widest circle, the best known of his hymns being the one beginning :

Jesu, meek and gentle,  
Son of God most high,  
Pitying, loving Saviour,  
Hear Thy children's cry.

### SCOTTISH POETS

*William Motherwell* (1797-1835) was a native of Glasgow. At the early age of twenty-two he became editor of a miscellany entitled *The Harp of Renfrewshire*. He had a great taste for antiquarian research, and as a result of his studies he published, in 1827, a collection of Scottish ballads entitled *Minstrelsy Ancient and Modern*. To this work he prefaced a historical introduction 'which must be the basis of all future investigations into the subject.' He edited a weekly journal in Paisley for awhile, and eventually rose to be editor of the *Glasgow Courier*. He published his collected poems in 1832.

*Robert Nicholl* (1814-1837), born in Auchtergaven, in Perthshire, in humble circumstances, rose by great diligence to the position of editor of the *Leeds Times*, an organ of the extreme Liberal party. His poems are all short pieces contributed to his paper from time to time.

*Allan Cunningham* (1784-1842) was born at Blackwood, near Dalswinton, in Dumfriesshire. In his sixth year he had the good fortune to hear Robert Burns read his poem *Tam o' Shanter*. With a very scant education he evinced a great taste for the acquisition of practical knowledge, and after serving his apprenticeship to his brother, who was a builder, went to London in the year 1810. In 1814 he was appointed Clerk of the Works to the eminent sculptor Sir Francis Chantrey, and in this position he remained until his death. He has been described as 'a happy imitator of old Scottish ballads,' which was early proved by his contributions to the periodical literature of the day. In 1822 he published *Sir Marmaduke Maxwell*, a dramatic poem, and in 1832 *The Maid of Elvar*, a rustic poem in twelve parts. He also wrote some works in prose. Four of his sons, Joseph, Alexander, Peter, and Francis, have attained to distinction in literature.



The best known of Cunningham's songs is *A Wet Sheet and a Flowing Sea*.

A wet sheet and a flowing sea,  
 A wind that follows fast,  
 And fills the white and rustling sail,  
 And bends the gallant mast ;  
 And bends the gallant mast, my boys,  
 While, like the eagle, free,  
 Away the good ship flies, and leaves  
 Old England on the lee.

\* \* \* \* \*

There's tempest in yon hornèd moon,  
 And lightning in yon cloud ;  
 And hark, the music, mariners—  
 The wind is piping loud ;  
 The wind is piping loud, my boys,  
 The lightning flashing free—  
 While the hollow oak our palace is,  
 Our heritage the sea.

*William Tennant* (1785–1848) was born at Anstruther, and became a parish schoolmaster on £40 a year. He was the author of 'a singular mock-heroic poem, *Anster Fair*, written in the *ottava rima stanza*, since made so popular by Byron in his *Beppo* and *Don Juan*.' The subject of the poem was the marriage of Maggie Lauder, the famous heroine of Scottish song. It became very popular, and has run through many editions. Tennant was also the author of some other poetical works, amongst them *The Thane of Fife* and *The Dinging Down of the Cathedral*. He eventually became Professor of Oriental Languages at St. Andrews University.

#### ABOUT MAGGIE LAUDER

Her face was as the summer cloud, whereon  
 The dawning sun delights to rest his rays !  
 Compared with it, old Sharon's vale, o'ergrown  
 With flaunting roses, had resigned its praise ;  
 For why ? Her face with Heaven's own roses shone,  
 Mocking the morn, and witching men to gaze ;  
 And he that gazed with cold unsmitten soul,  
 That blockhead's heart was ice thrice baked beneath the Pole.

*James Montgomery* (1771–1854) was the son of a Moravian missionary who died whilst engaged in the work in the island of Tobago. He was born at Irvine, in Ayrshire, and educated by the Moravians at Fulneck, near Leeds. His first success as a poet was achieved by the publication of *The Wanderer in Switzerland*, which he issued in 1806. A great portion of his



life was spent in following the precarious occupation of a journalist. He edited *The Sheffield Iris*, and was imprisoned twice for imputed libels. In addition to the poem already mentioned, he wrote two beautiful descriptive poems—*Greenland* and *The Pelican Island*, which met with great favour; *The West Indies* (1809); *The World before the Flood* (1812); and *Prison Amusements*. He was awarded a pension of £200 a year for his services to literature.

#### FROM 'GREENLAND'

'Tis sunset ; to the firmament serene  
The Atlantic wave reflects a gorgeous scene ;  
Broad in the cloudless west, a belt of gold  
Girds the blue hemisphere ; above unrolled  
The keen clear air grows palpable to sight,  
Embodied in a flash of crimson light,  
Through which the evening star, with milder gleam,  
Descends to meet her image in the stream.

#### PRAYER

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire  
Uttered or unexpressed ;  
The motion of a hidden fire  
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,  
The falling of a tear ;  
The upward glancing of an eye  
When none but God is near.

\* \* \* \*

O Thou, by whom we come to God,  
The Life, the Truth, the Way,  
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod :  
Lord, teach us how to pray !

*The Baroness Nairne* (1766–1845), whose maiden name was Carolina Oliphant, was a member of the family of Oliphant of Gask, and was 'justly celebrated for her beauty, talents, and worth.' She was the author of a number of lyrical poems, some of which are still very popular. Perhaps the best known are *Call'er Herrin*, a popular song, and *The Laird o' Cockpen*.

*Alexander Smith* (1830–1867) was born at Kilmarnock. He became famous on the appearance, in 1853, of his *Poems*, the most striking amongst them being *A Life Drama*, 'written amid the toils of drawing patterns for a muslin house in Glasgow.' The poem consists of a series of thirteen dramatic scenes. A second volume, called *City Poems*, appeared in 1857, in which



'the black streets of smoky Glasgow are glorified with poetic light, which sometimes brightens to sublimity.' In 1861 appeared a fine poem of the epic class entitled *Edwin of Deira*. He joined with Sydney Dobell in a series of *War Sonnets*, and also wrote some prose works.

## A CHILD RUNS PAST

O thou bright thing, fresh from the hand of God ;  
 The motions of thy dancing limbs are swayed  
 By the unceasing movement of thy being !  
 Nearer I seem to God when looking on thee.  
 'Tis ages since He made His youngest star,  
 His hand was on thee as 'twere yesterday.  
 Thou later revelation ! Silver stream,  
 Breaking with laughter from the lake divine  
 Whence all things flow. O bright and singing babe,  
 What wilt thou be hereafter ?

*William Edmondstoune Aytoun* (1813-1865) was born in Edinburgh. While at college his poem of *Judith* attracted the attention of Professor Wilson. His fame, however, now rests chiefly on his *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers* (1848). He became Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the University of Edinburgh, and Vice-Admiral of Orkney. In conjunction with Sir Theodore Martin he wrote the well-known *Ballads by Bon Gaultier*, and translated the *Poems and Ballads of Goethe*. He also wrote the historic romance of *Bothwell*, and a most pungent satire on modern poets entitled *Firmilian, a Spasmodic Tragedy*, by Percy T. Jones.

## FROM 'THE BURIAL MARCH OF DUNDEE'

Sound the fife, and cry the slogan—  
 Let the pibroch shake the air  
 With its wild triumphant music.  
 Worthy of the freight we bear.

Let the ancient hills of Scotland  
 Hear once more the battle-song  
 Swell within their glens and valleys  
 As the clansmen march along !

*Robert Pollok* (1799-1827) was born at Muirhouse, Renfrewshire, studied at Glasgow, and became a minister of the United Secession Church. He was the author of a long poem in blank verse entitled *The Course of Time*, which is a work of considerable merit, some passages of which have 'quite a



Miltonic ring.' It is Calvinistic in tone, and is an essay on the life and destiny of man. Pollok also wrote a prose work called *Tales of the Covenanters*.

*Joanna Baillie* (1762-1851) was the daughter of a Scottish minister, and was born in the manse of Bothwell, in the county of Lanark, but lived the greater part of her life at Hampstead. She wrote a number of plays, of which her tragedy *De Montfort* is the best; but besides her dramas she wrote some excellent Scottish songs and other poems, which were collected and published under the title *Fugitive Verses*.

FROM 'THE SHEPHERD'S SONG'

My sheep-bell tinkles frae the west,  
 My lambs are bleating near,  
 But still the sound that I lo'e best  
 Alack ! I canna hear.  
 Oh, no ! sad an' slow !  
 The shadow lingers still ;  
 And like a lanely ghaist I stand,  
 And croon upon the hill.

*William Knox* (1789-1825) was the author of *The Lonely Hearth*, *Songs of Israel*, *The Harp of Zion*, and other poems. Sir Walter Scott, in his diary, attributes to Knox 'a fine strain of pensive poetry.'

*Thomas Pringle* (1788-1834), a native of Roxburghshire, was one of the founders of *Blackwood's Magazine*. He was the author of *Scenes of Teviotdale*, *Ephemerides*, and other poems. He went to the Cape of Good Hope in 1820, with his father and brothers, and established the little settlement called Glen Lynden. His last work was entitled *African Sketches*, which was autobiographical, and interspersed with verses here and there.

*Robert Gilfillan* (1798-1850) was born at Dunfermline. His *Poems and Songs* have passed through three editions.

*Thomas Mouncey Cunningham* (1766-1834) was the elder brother of Allan Cunningham. He was a minor poet long before his brother had come before the public as an author.

*William Laidlaw* (1780-1845) was a son of the 'Ettrick Shepherd's' master at Blackhouse. *Lucy's Flittin'* is 'deservedly popular for its unaffected tenderness and simplicity.'



*William Nicholson* (died in 1849) was known as 'The Galloway Poet.' He lived a dissipated life, and died a pauper. His poems were edited in 1897.

*James Hislop* (1798-1827), born at Kirkconnel, near the source of the Nith, was a shepherd-boy who wrote at least one striking poem, which was written 'at the grave of a party of slain Covenanters.'

*William Thom* (1789-1848) was known as 'The Inverury Poet.' He was at different times a weaver and a travelling pedlar. He first attracted notice by a poem entitled *The Blind Boy's Pranks*, which appeared in the *Aberdeen Herald*, and in 1844 he produced a volume entitled *Rhymes and Recollections of a Hand-loom Weaver*.

*David Vedder* (1790-1854), a native of Burness, in Orkney, was the author of *Orcadian Sketches*, published in 1842. His Scottish songs and Norse ballads were popular in his native county.

*The Rev Thomas Garratt* (1796-1841) was born at Baddesley, in Warwickshire. He was an M.A. of the University of Aberdeen, and became eventually Vicar of Audley, having been for a while private tutor to Mr. Gladstone. He published a number of poetical works, the best of which is entitled *The Pastor* (1824).

*George Outram* (1805-1856) was the son of a manager of the Clyde Ironworks. He was the author of a small volume entitled *Lyrics, Legal and Miscellaneous*.

*John Campbell Shairp* (1819-1885), Professor of Poetry at Oxford, was the author of *Kilmahoe, a Highland Pastoral* (1864), and of *Studies in Poetry and Philosophy* (1868). He eventually became Principal of St. Andrews University. He also wrote a *Life of Burns* and other works in prose.

*William Bell Scott* (1811-1890) was celebrated alike as a poet and as a painter. Besides his paintings, which were chiefly historical or poetical, he published five volumes of poetry.

*Dr. Charles Mackay* (1814-1889) was born at Perth. He was editor of the *Glasgow Herald* (1844-1847) and of the *Illustrated London News* (1848-1859), and New York correspondent of *The Times* during the Civil War (1862-1865). He was celebrated



as a song-writer, two of his compositions, *Cheer, Boys, Cheer!* and *There's a good Time coming*, being special favourites.

*James Thomson* (1834-1882), poet and pessimist, was born at Port Glasgow. He was an army schoolmaster, from which post he was discharged for a slight breach of discipline in 1862. He afterwards lived a sad and desolate life in London, and died in poverty in 1882. His chief works are *The City of Dreadful Night, and other Poems* (1880), *Vane's Story*, *Advice from the Nile, and other Poems*, etc. A collected edition of his works was published in 1895.

### IRISH POETS

*The Rev. Charles Wolfe* (1791-1823) was born in Dublin. His literary reputation may be said to rest upon one short poem—*The Burial of Sir John Moore*. The story goes that 'reading in the *Edinburgh Annual Register* a description of the death and interment of Sir John Moore on the battlefield of Corunna, this amiable young poet turned it into verse with such taste, pathos, and even sublimity, that his poem has obtained an imperishable place in our literature.' The poem was published anonymously in an Irish newspaper in 1817, and was for many years unclaimed, until, in 1841, a Scottish teacher 'ungenerously and dishonestly sought to pluck the laurel from the grave of its owner.' It was not until then that the friends of Wolfe informed the public of the true authorship of the poem, whereupon the false claimant confessed his imposture and expressed his sorrow for the attempted fraud. Wolfe's literary compositions were collected and published in 1825. The poem is too well known to need an insertion here. The question as to whether it was, strictly speaking, original, or merely an 'adapted translation' from another poem on a similar subject, but in a foreign language, has often been raised, but never quite settled. The circumstances under which the burial of Sir John Moore actually took place have also given food for controversy. But the following account, taken from *A Narrative of the British Army in Spain* (1809), by James Moore, Esquire, may be relied upon as authentic :

'From a sentiment of veneration that has been felt in every age, the corpse of a man who has excited admiration cannot be



neglected as common clay. This impression leads mankind sometimes to treat an inanimate body with peculiar respect, and even to bestow upon it unfelt honours.

' This was now the subject of deliberation among the military friends of Sir John Moore who had survived the engagement, when Colonel Anderson informed them that he had heard the General repeatedly declare " that if he was killed in battle he wished to be buried where he had fallen." General Hope and Colonel Graham immediately acceded to this suggestion, and it was determined that the body should be interred on the rampart of the citadel of Corunna.

' At twelve o'clock at night the remains of Sir John Moore were accordingly carried to the citadel by Colonel Graham, Major Colborne, and the aides-de-camp, and deposited in Colonel Graham's quarters.

' A grave was dug by a party of the 9th Regiment, the A.D.C. attending by turns. No coffin could be procured, and the body was never undressed, but wrapped up by the officers of his staff in a military cloak and blankets. Towards eight o'clock in the morning some firing was heard. It was then resolved to finish the interment lest a serious attack should be made, on which the officers would be ordered away, and not suffered to pay their last duties to their General. The officers bore the body to the grave, the funeral service was read by the chaplain, and the corpse was covered with earth.'

*Richard Henry Wilde* (1789-1847), poet and translator, was born in Dublin on the 24th of September, 1789. When eight years old his parents removed to Baltimore, in the United States, where he received his early education. In 1815 he was called to the Bar, and soon rose to a position of eminence as a lawyer. He was an accomplished linguist, and published translations from French, Spanish, and Italian poets. His original poems were justly appreciated. He died in New Orleans on the 10th of September, 1847. The following lines were much praised by Lord Byron :

MY LIFE IS LIKE THE SUMMER ROSE

My life is like the summer rose,  
That opens to the morning sky,  
But ere the shades of evening close,  
Is scattered on the ground—to die.



Yet on the rose's humble bed  
The sweetest dews of night are shed,  
As if she wept the waste to see—  
But none shall weep a tear for me !

My life is like the autumn leaf,  
That trembles in the moon's pale ray,  
Its hold is frail—its date is brief,  
Restless—and soon to pass away !  
Yet ere that leaf shall fall and fade,  
The parent tree will mourn its shade,  
The winds bewail the leafless tree,  
But none shall breathe a sigh for me !

My life is like the prints which feet  
Have left on Tampa's desert strand ;  
Soon as the rising tide shall beat,  
All trace will vanish from the sand ;  
Yet, as if grieving to efface  
All vestige of the human race,  
On that lone shore loud moans the sea,  
But none, alas ! shall mourn for me !

*John Banim* (1798–1842) was born in Kilkenny. With his brother Michael he wrote *Tales by the O'Hara Family*, thought by some critics to be the best delineation of Irish life yet published, 'free from the theatricality of Lever and kindred writers.' They are characterized by powerful imagination, raciness, and truth. His few good poems are gems.

SOGGARTH AROON (PRIEST, DEAR)

Am I the slave they say,  
Soggarth aroon ?  
Since you did show the way,  
Soggarth aroon,  
Their slave no more to be,  
While they would work with me  
Old Ireland's slavery,  
Soggarth aroon.

*James Joseph Callanan* (1795–1829) was born in Cork. He was for some time tutor under the celebrated Dr. Maginn, and for awhile chose the lovely island of Inchidony, at the south of Clonakilty Bay, as a hermitage, where he wrote some of his best poems. His translations from the Irish are celebrated for their grace and fidelity.

*Thomas Osborne Davis* (1814–1845), born at Mallow, was celebrated as a poet and political writer. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, where he graduated B.A. in 1836. He was called to the Bar, but did not practise much at his profession.



He was one of the chief contributors to the *Nation*. His collected poems were published in Messrs. Duffy and Son's *National Library*.

*Helen Selina Blackwood, Lady Dufferin* (1807-1867), a sister of the Hon. Mrs. Norton, and a granddaughter of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, was a popular writer in her day. Her ballads and poems were the genuine outcome of a real love of the people, and had the effect of gaining for her their affection and respect. Perhaps Lady Dufferin's most popular poem is *The Lament of the Irish Emigrant*. The following is typical of her style :

O BAY OF DUBLIN !

O Bay of Dublin ! my heart you're troublin',  
Your beauty haunts me like a fevered dream ;  
Like frozen fountains that the sun sets bubblin'  
My heart's blood warms when I but hear your name.  
And never till this life pulse ceases  
My earliest thought you'll cease to be ;  
O there's no one here knows how fair that place is,  
And no one cares how dear it is to me.

*Sir Samuel Ferguson* (1810-1886) was born in Belfast. He was 'a man of encyclopædic learning, great industry, and high poetic power.' His well-known translations from the Celtic are excellent, indeed 'unrivalled for truth and grace.' He was a historian of high reputation.

*Gerald Griffin* (1803-1840), born in Limerick, was celebrated as a poet and novelist. His novel *The Collegians* is said to be the most perfect Irish novel ever published. 'After a life of anxious labour, spent partly in London and partly in Ireland, he entered the order of the Christian Brothers in 1838, and in their cemetery he is buried.

EILEEN AROON

When, like the early rose,  
Eileen aroon !  
Beauty in childhood blows,  
Eileen aroon !  
When, like a diadem,  
Buds blush around the stem,  
Which is the fairest gem ?  
Eileen aroon !

*James Sheridan Knowles* (1794-1862), born at Cork in 1794, takes rank in the history of our literature as the most successful of modern tragic dramatists. His first play, *Caius Gracchus*, was



performed in 1815. It was followed by *Virginus*, one of the most popular dramas of recent times. It is founded on the tragic incident, taken from Roman history, of a maiden being slain by the hand of her father as a means of saving her from shame and tyranny. *The Hunchback* and *William Tell* are considered to be this author's best works. He also published *The Wife, a Tale of Mantua*, *Woman's Wit*, *The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green*, *The Love Chase*, etc. Two novels, *Henry Fortescue* and *George Lovell*, were also written by him. A current of poetry sparkles through his plays, 'not with a dazzling lustre,' as a writer in the *Edinburgh Review* has aptly said, 'not with a gorgeousness which engrosses our attention, but mildly and agreeably, seldom impeding with useless glitter the progress and development of incident and character, but mingling itself with them, and raising them pleasantly above the prosaic level of common life.'

*Sir Aubrey Hunt De Vere* (1788-1846) was a native of county Limerick. His name was Hunt, but he assumed that of De Vere, in addition, in 1832. He was the author of two dramatic poems, *Julian the Apostate* (1822) and *The Duke of Marcia* (1823), and a volume dedicated to Wordsworth and entitled *A Song of Faith, and Other Poems* (1842).

*Aubrey Thomas De Vere* (1814-1902) was the son of Sir Aubrey De Vere, and was born at Currah Chase, county Limerick. He was the author of a number of volumes of prose and poetry, amongst them *The Waldenses, with Other Poems* (1842); *The Search after Proserpine* (1843); *Mary Tudor*, a drama (1847); *The Infant Bridal, and Other Poems* (1864), etc.

*The Rev. George Croly* (1780-1863) was a native of Dublin, and educated at Trinity College, Dublin. He became Rector of St. Stephen's, Walbrook, London. He was a prolific writer in both poetry and prose. Mr. Shaw says 'his style was gorgeous and his imagination fertile.' His chief poetical works are *Paris* in 1815 (a description of the works of art in the Louvre); *The Angel of the World* (1820); *Verse Illustrations to Gems from the Antique*; *Pride shall have a Fall*, a comedy; *Catiline*, a tragedy; *Poetical Works*, in two volumes (1830); *The Modern Orlando*, a satirical poem (1846), etc. He also wrote historical works and



some prose fiction. As an example of the 'gorgeousness' of his style we quote from *Paris* :

Magnificence of ruin ! what has time  
In all it ever gazed upon of war,  
Of the wild rage of storm, or deadly clime,  
Seen, with that battle's vengeance to compare ?  
How glorious shone the invaders' pomp afar !  
Like pampered lions from the spoil they came ;  
The land before them silence and despair,  
The land behind them massacre and flame ;  
Blood will have tenfold blood. What are they now ? A name.

*Samuel Lover* (1798-1868) was born in Dublin. He began life as an artist, but abandoned that calling for literature, which was more congenial. He is, of course, best known as the author of *Handy Andy*, an 'extravaganza novel' of Irish country life, but he was also the author of a number of popular songs, such as *The Angels' Whisper*, *Molly Bawn*, *The Four-leaved Shamrock*, etc. 'Fully as musical as Moore's, his songs are very much more Irish in tone and colour, and may be taken as typical of one side of the national character.'

#### FROM 'THE ANGELS' WHISPER'

And while they are keeping bright watch o'er thy sleeping,  
Oh ! pray to them softly, my baby, with me ;  
And say thou would'st rather they'd watch o'er thy father,  
For I know that the angels are whispering with thee.

*John Keegan* (1809-1849) was born in Queen's County. He was a peasant, and received his education at a hedge-school, but was 'throughout his life emphatically a poet of the people.'

*Jane Francesca, Lady Wilde* (1826-1896), the daughter of Archdeacon Elgee, was married in 1851 to Sir William R. W. Wilde, a distinguished surgeon in Dublin and President of the Royal Irish Academy. She wrote under the name of 'Speranza,' and her collected poems were published in 1864.

*William Allingham* (1828-1889) was born in Ulster, and was 'long a respected man of letters in London.' In 1850 he published *The Music-Master, and Other Poems*, which was followed in 1854 by *Day and Night Songs*. *Laurence Bloomfield in Ireland* is his most ambitious work, but is not generally looked upon by critics as a success, whether it be viewed merely as a poem or more particularly as a 'shedder of light upon the Irish problem.'



*George Darley* (1795-1846) was successful as editor of the works of Beaumont and Fletcher. His poetical works, which have been recently reissued, include a beautiful lyric entitled *The Loveliness of Love*.

*Denis Florence M'Carthy* (1817-1882) was born in Dublin, and followed the profession of a barrister. In his day he was a regular contributor to the *Nation*, and published several volumes of original poems. His translations of Calderon's dramas are thought to be the finest yet achieved.

*Francis Davis* (1810-1885), known as 'The Belfast Man,' was born in Ballincollig, county Cork. He was a contributor to the *Nation*, and, while engaged in pursuing the humble calling of a weaver, edited the *Belfastman's Journal*, and published three volumes of poems. During the Catholic Emancipation movement he helped the popular cause by means of his poetry.

*Richard Dalton Williams* (1822-1862), born in Dublin, was educated in Carlow College, studied medicine in Dublin, and took his diploma in Edinburgh. In 1851 he emigrated to America, where he died of consumption, July, 1862. His poems were issued in a collected form by the proprietors of the *Nation* newspaper, in which journal the greater portion of them had previously appeared.

#### ADIEU TO INNISFAIL

Adieu !—The snowy sail  
 Swells her bosom to the gale,  
 And our bark from Innisfail  
                     Bounds away.  
 While we gaze upon thy shore,  
 That we never shall see more,  
 And the blinding tears flow o'er,  
                     We pray :—

*Ma vuirneen* ! be thou long  
 In peace the queen of song—  
 In battle proud and strong  
                     As the sea.  
 Be saints thine offspring still,  
 True heroes guard each hill,  
 And harps by every rill  
                     Sound free !

*Dr. Robert Dwyer Joyce* (1830-1882) was born in Glenosheen, county Limerick. He emigrated to Boston, United States, in 1866, and remained there until a few months before his death,



which occurred in Dublin. Before he left Ireland he had already achieved considerable distinction as a physician, poet, and journalist, but his chief professional and literary work was accomplished at the other side of the Atlantic. His chief poem is entitled *Deirdré*. 'His poetical versions of the old legends of Ireland embody manly thought and brilliant fancy in melodious verse. His love and minutely accurate observation of nature, and swift enthusiasm, gift his poems with a strong fascination.' He was a brother of Dr. Patrick Weston Joyce, the author of *Irish Names of Places*, and other well-known works.

FROM THE 'DRINAN DOUN' (SLOE-TREE)

The streams they were singing their gladsome song,  
The soft winds were blowing the wild woods among,  
The mountains shone bright in the red setting sun,  
And my Love in my arms 'neath the *Drinan Doun*.

'Tis my prayer in the morning, my dream at night,  
To sit thus again by my heart's dear delight,  
With her blue eyes of gladness, her hair like the sun,  
And her sweet loving kisses, 'neath the *Drinan Doun*.

*The Rev. Francis Sylvester Mahony* (1805-1866), better known by his *nom de plume*, 'Father Prout,' was born in Cork. He was a priest of the Roman Catholic Church, but gave up his cure and took to literature as a profession. 'His linguistic powers, great learning, keen wit, and fecundity of rhyme placed him in the first rank even among the brilliant band with whom he was associated.' Perhaps the most deservedly popular of his poems is that entitled *The Bells of Shandon*, which begins :

With deep affection and recollection  
I often think of those Shandon bells,  
Whose sounds so wild would, in days of childhood,  
Fling round my cradle their magic spells.  
On this I ponder, where'er I wander,  
And thus grow fonder, sweet Cork, of thee ;  
With thy bells of Shandon  
That sound so grand on  
The pleasant waters of the river Lee.

*Mrs. Alexander* (1818-1895), wife of the Archbishop of Armagh, was almost unrivalled as a writer of hymns for children. *Once in Royal David's city, There is a green hill far away, We are but little children weak, and All things bright and beautiful*, are remarkable for simplicity of diction and earnestness of religious spirit. Mrs. Alexander's maiden name was Cecil Frances Humphreys.



*Sir Charles Gavan Duffy* (1816-1903) was born in Monaghan, and rose to distinction as a journalist and politician. He went to Australia in 1856, and became Prime Minister of Victoria in 1871. In 1873 he received the honour of knighthood. He died in Paris in 1903. He was a writer of vigorous prose and excellent poetry.

*Oscar Wilde* (1856-1900) was the younger son of Sir William Wilde, an eminent Irish surgeon and antiquary. He was educated first at Trinity College, Dublin, but migrated subsequently to Magdalen College, Oxford, where, in 1878, he won the Newdigate prize for a poem on *Ravenna*. It was during his time at Oxford that he started the 'æsthetic' movement with which his name was identified for a considerable number of years, but which has now almost completely died out. Wilde was the author of a volume of poems which appeared in 1881, and which were very favourably received by a certain class of readers. The poems were 'marked by a singular mixture of verbal felicity and affected sentiment,' to quote the happy phrase of Mr. Chambers—a criticism which might be taken as a description not merely of the poems, but of the poet himself. He also wrote some novels and several successful plays. In 1895 he was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for a criminal offence. He was received into the Roman Catholic Church before his death, which took place in 1900. His last work was a poem entitled *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*.

*John Francis Waller* (1810-1894) was born in Limerick, and was a member of a well-known Irish family of Cromwellian origin. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, where he graduated B.A. in 1831, and eventually proceeded to the degree of LL.D. He was called to the Irish Bar in 1833. He began at an early age to indulge in literary exercises, and was one of the first contributors to the *Dublin University Magazine*, of which he became editor in succession to Charles Lever, the celebrated novelist. At first he wrote under the name of 'Jonathan Freke Slingsby.' His contributions consisted of articles and poems. A number of his poems have been set to music, and some translated into the German language. Lord Houghton, better known to the literary world as Richard Monckton Milnes, considered Waller's *Song of the Glass* to be the best drinking song of the



nineteenth century. Mr. Chambers says that 'Waller was distinctly happy as a writer of what may be termed ceremonial verse, and some of his odes on various public occasions are successful attempts in a kind of writing in which it is very easy to fail.' His principal poetical works are *Ravenscroft Hall, and Other Poems* (1852), *The Dead Bridal* (1856), *Occasional Odes* (1864), and *Peter Brown* (1872). He also edited the poetical works of Goldsmith and Moore.

## FROM 'CUSHLA-MA-CHREE'

Oh my loved one ! my lost one ! say, why didst thou leave me  
 To linger on earth with my heart in thy grave !  
 Oh ! would thy cold arms, love, might ope to receive me  
 To my rest 'neath the dark boughs that over thee wave.  
 Still from our once-happy dwelling I roam, love,  
 Evermore seeking, my own bride, for thee ;  
 Ah, Mary ! wherever thou art is my home, love,  
 And I'll soon be beside thee, my *Cushla-ma-chree*.

## WELSH POETS

*William Ellis Jones* (died in 1848) was a poet of superior merit. He gained the Bardic Chair at Brecon Eisteddvod in 1822, and his works have been published.

*Robert Williams* (1767-1850) was a poet of considerable abilities, whose bardic name was Robert ab Gwilym Dhu. His poetical works, which appeared in 1841, are entitled *Gardd Eifion*, and evince 'a talent of no common cast. 'The unaffected but finished style in which they are written has rendered them deservedly popular.'

*John Blackwell* (1797-1840) was, in 1823, elected as Bard to the Ruthin Cymreigyddion Society. He won many prizes for his poems. A complete collection of them has been published and edited by the Rev. Griffith Edwards. The volume is entitled *Ceinion Alun*.

*Peter Jones* (1775-1845) was better known as Pedr Vardd. He was the author of several prize poems, and was elected to fill the Bardic Chair of Gwent on account of his poem *The Giving of the Law on Sinai*. He is distinguished for correct, chaste, and flowing versification, but is deficient in energy and invention.



## APPENDIX I

### THE SHAKESPEARE-BACON CONTROVERSY

THE time has long gone by when what is known as the Baconian theory as to the true authorship of the plays which bear the name of Shakespeare could be altogether ignored by the critic and the historian. It was in the year 1852 that the attention of the literary world was arrested by an article entitled 'Who wrote Shakespeare?' which appeared in *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*. This was the first English essay on a subject which had been vexing the minds of some of the keenest literary critics for a considerable time. Long before that date the Shakespearian authorship had been held by some of them as distinctly questionable: Lord Palmerston and Lord Byron were amongst those who doubted. Hallam fell a victim to the craze. In 1837 Lord Beaconsfield put the following expression into the mouth of one of the characters in *Venetia* :

'And who is Shakespeare? We know as much of him as we do of Homer. Did he write half the plays attributed to him? Did he write one whole play? I doubt it.'

Again, in 1856, Delia Bacon, an American authoress, raised the question of Shakespeare's claim. Her book was published, with the aid of Nathaniel Hawthorne, who furnished it with a preface. In the same year a letter on the subject was written by William Henry Smith to Lord Ellesmere, followed, in 1857, by a short treatise in which he pointed to Francis Bacon as the more likely author. In 1859 appeared an essay in which Lord Campbell sought to prove that the author, whoever he may have been, was a trained lawyer, whereas there is no evidence whatever to



prove that Shakespeare was, or could have been, one. In 1867 Judge Holmes, in America, advocated Bacon's claims, as did also Mrs. Potts, in England, in 1883. Whittier says: 'Whether Bacon wrote the wonderful plays or not, I am quite sure the man Shakespeare neither did nor could.' James Russell Lowell refers to the reputed author as 'The apparition known to moderns as Shakespeare.' Oliver Wendell Holmes writes: 'I would not be surprised to find myself ranged with Mrs. Potts and Judge Holmes on the side of the philosopher against the play-actor.' Mr. Gladstone said, with characteristic caution: 'Considering what Bacon was, I have always regarded the discussion as one perfectly serious, and to be respected.' John Bright went further, and gave it as his opinion that 'Any man who believes that William Shakespeare of Stratford wrote *Hamlet* or *Lear* is a fool!' The number of writers on the subject is fast assuming what the old-fashioned will consider to be alarming proportions.

Whether the individual student forms an estimate of the relative weights of the claims put forward on either side or not, it is well for him to become conversant with the arguments. With a view to aiding him in this respect we will briefly summarize a few of the most striking points which are adduced in support of the Baconian claim, presenting them in two divisions, as follows:

### I. *Arguments Against Shakespeare.*

1. The plays were never entered at Stationers' Hall in Shakespeare's name, either by himself or by anyone else on his behalf.

2. It is said to be 'unquestionable' that Shakespeare did not write all the plays attributed to him, therefore 'someone' wrote those which are not his. All plays attributed to him are said to fall into two groups—clever and commonplace. It is contended that the same man could not have produced both.

3. Shakespeare does not appear to have had any education to speak of previous to his going to London. How, in a few years, did he become a philosopher? It is impossible. He hadn't the learning displayed by the author of the plays. Moreover, he could not have obtained it in the time.

4. On retiring from the stage Shakespeare went back to his native place, and took to farming as a means of livelihood. From the date of his retirement until he died he wrote nothing, even if



he read anything. We are asked if it is likely that the author of *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, and all those plays which have been the wonder of the intellectual world ever since, could so abandon all his former literary pursuits ?

5. Shakespeare made a will, enumerating everything of which he died possessed. No MSS., books, or copyrights are mentioned in it. Thus, we are reminded, as he had said nothing while he lived, so he left nothing behind him when he died which would enable us to identify any particular play as the product of his brain or pen.

6. He died in 1616. In 1623 there appeared a printed Folio, fathered by Heminge and Condell, containing thirty-six plays which they represented as being all that Shakespeare ever wrote, though 'wholly without any authority from him, his executors, or any of his family.'

7. We are assured, on the authority of Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, that six of these plays had never been heard of before. This, of course, raises a question as to the honesty of the publishers, who asserted that they were the 'collected' plays of Shakespeare.

8. The interval between 1587 and 1592 must have been the chief period of his literary education, but there is not a particle of evidence concerning his occupation or whereabouts during that time.

9. If Shakespeare had been the author contemporary dramatists would have been jealous of his prosperity. As it was, we have only such a reference as that of Greene, who calls him 'an upstart crow.'

10. That Shakespeare had any legal training is denied by Lord Campbell and other critics.

11. Epitaphs attributed to him with some show of authenticity, as well as the lampoon on Sir Thomas Lucy, and the wit-combats, could not have been written by the same man that wrote the plays.

12. The portrait of Shakespeare which appeared with the Folio of 1623 is 'hard to digest' as that of the man who wrote the plays. It is, moreover, the only portrait which has the least claim to a proved authenticity.

13. The five extant signatures are laid before us. We are asked what we think of them, and what of the labour of writing thirty-six plays in the same hand.



14. Ben Jonson, in enumerating the greatest wits of his own time, gives us a list in which the name of Shakespeare is not found.

15. Judge Webb, in a profound work entitled *The Mystery of William Shakespeare*, says: 'What do we actually know of Shakespeare? Whether his immortalities were composed in lodgings at Southwark, or in the chambers at Gray's Inn, we know nothing—absolutely nothing—about him.' And of this passage the Rev. W. A. Sutton, author of *The Shakespeare Enigma*, says: 'It is an amazing fact which is thus graphically expressed.'

These are some of the chief arguments urged by Lord Penzance and others against the Shakespearian authorship. We will now mention some of those adduced in favour of Bacon.

## II. *Arguments in Favour of Bacon.*

1. Bacon was a contemporary of Shakespeare, and possessed all that varied knowledge which is said to have been lacking in Shakespeare's case.

2. Writing for the stage was accounted a disreputable occupation in those days. A man in the position of Lord Bacon would naturally write plays, if he did so at all, under an assumed name, so as not to disclose his identity.

3. It seems natural, we are told, that he should adopt the name of the acting-manager under whom the plays were produced.

4. He would adopt the old course when, having enlarged and improved his plays, he resolved to republish them in the Folio of 1623, with the assistance of Messrs. Heminge and Condell.

5. In many of Bacon's preserved letters there is 'something suggestive of a curious undermeaning, impressing the reader with an idea of more than appears on the surface.'

6. Some writers on this subject, notably Mrs. Elizabeth Gallup, profess to have discovered in the plays the biliteral cipher of Lord Bacon 'found embodied in his works.' Based upon this discovery, we are assured, 'the proofs are overwhelming and irresistible that Bacon was the author of the delightful lines attributed to Spenser—the fantastic conceit of Peele and Greene—the historical romances of Marlowe, the immortal plays and poems put forth in Shakespeare's name, as well as the *Anatomy of Melan-*



*choly* of Burton.' By way of solace for this somewhat wholesale attempt at disillusionment we are told that 'the plays of Shakespeare lose nothing of their dramatic power or wondrous beauty, nor deserve the less admiration of the scholar and critic, because inconsistencies are removed in the knowledge that they came from the brain of the greatest student and writer of that age, and were not a 'flash of genius' descended on one of peasant birth, less noble history, and of no preparatory literary attainments.

7. We have 'laid on the table' a mass of so-called internal evidence, in the shape of parallel passages, peculiar words, and groups of words, which are common to the plays and the acknowledged writings of Bacon. These are collected for us in such books as *The Authorship of Shakespeare*, by Judge Holmes, and *The Great Cryptogram*, by Ignatius Donnelly. Even more striking are 885 *Parallelisms* and twenty *Coincidences* collected and published by Mr. Edwin Reed, of which we append examples :

### 8. *Parallelisms*

#### I

##### SHAKESPEARE

'Beast with many heads.'  
*Coriolanus*, iv. 1 (1623).

##### BACON

'Beast with many heads.'  
*Charge against Talbot* (1614).  
'Monster with many heads.'  
*Conference of Pleasure* (1592).

#### 2

'As the mournful crocodile  
With sorrow snares relenting passengers.'  
2 *Henry VI.*, iii. 1 (1623).

'It is the wisdom of crocodiles  
that shed tears when they would  
devour.'  
*Essay of Wisdom* (1625).

#### 3

'Violets dim,  
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's  
eyes  
Or Cytherea's breath.'  
*Winter's Tale*, iv. 4 (1623).

'That which, above all others,  
yields the sweetest smell in the air,  
is the violet, especially the white.'  
*Essay of Gardens* (1625).

#### 4

'He looked upon things precious, as  
they were  
The common muck of the world.'  
*Coriolanus*, ii. 2 (1623).

'Money is like muck, not good  
except it be spread upon the earth.'  
*Essay of Seditions* (1625).



## 5

## SHAKESPEARE

'Love is merely a madness.'  
*As You Like It*, iii. 2 (1623).

## BACON

'Transported to the mad degree  
 of love.'—*Essay of Love* (1612).

## 6

'Jupiter  
 Became a bull, and bellow'd.'  
*Winter's Tale*, iv. 4 (1623).  
 'As I slept, methought  
 Great Jupiter, upon his eagle back'd,  
 Appeared to me.'  
*Cymbeline*, v. 5 (1623).

'The poet tells us that Jupiter  
 in pursuit of his loves assumed  
 many shapes—a bull, an eagle, a  
 swan.'  
*Wisdom of the Ancients* (1609).

'You were also, Jupiter, a swan.'  
*Merry Wives of Windsor*, v. 5  
 (1623).

## 7

'The world on wheels.'  
*Two Gentlemen of Verona*, iii. 1  
 (1623).  
 'The third part [of the world], then,  
 is drunk; would it were all,  
 That it might go on wheels.'  
*Antony and Cleopatra*, ii. 7  
 (1623).

'The world runs on wheels.'  
*Promus* (1594-1596).

## 8

'You are so fretful, you cannot live  
 long.'—*Henry IV.*, iii. 3 (1598).

'To live long one must be  
 patient.'—*Promus* (1594-1596).

## 9

'Like to the Pontic sea,  
 Whose icy current and compulsive  
 course  
 Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps  
 due on  
 To the Propontic and the Helles-  
 pont.'—*Othello*, iii. 3 (1622).

'In the Mediterranean Sea, a  
 slight ebb begins at the Atlantic,  
 but a flow from the other end.'  
*De Fluxu et Refluxu Maris*  
 (1616).

## 10

'Cromwell, I charge thee, fling  
 away ambition:  
 By that sin fell the angels.'  
*Henry VIII.*, iii. 2 (1623).

'The desire of power in excess  
 caused the angels to fall.'  
*Essay of Goodness* (1625).

## 11

'Good wine needs no bush.'  
*As You Like It*, Epilogue  
 (1623).

'Good wine needs no bush.'  
*Promus* (1594-1596).

## 12

'He would not be a wolf  
 But that he sees the Romans are  
 but sheep.'  
*Julius Cæsar*, i. 3 (1623).

'Cato, the censor, said that the  
 Romans were like sheep.'  
*Advancement of Learning*  
 (1603-1605).



It remains for us to mention one of Mr. Reed's *Coincidences*.

9. *A Coincidence.*

Bacon was a member of Gray's Inn; he had lodgings there during the greater part of his life. In close alliance with Gray's Inn was the Inner Temple, the two fraternal institutions always uniting in their Christmas revels, and each had its associates' coat of arms over its own gateway. Of their internal affairs the public knew but little, for guests were seldom admitted behind the scenes.

The Inner Temple was governed in accordance with some very remarkable rules. One of these rules, handed down from the time of the founders, the old Knights Templar, enjoined silence at meals. Members dining in the hall were expected to make their wants known by signs, or, if that were not practicable, in low tones or whispers only.

Another rule provided that members should seat themselves in the dining-hall in messes of four, the tables being of the exact length required to accommodate three messes each. This arrangement prevails to the present day.

Shakespeare—*i.e.*, the author of the plays—was familiar with these petty details. He laid one of the scenes of *1 King Henry VI.* (ii. 4) in the Temple garden itself, where we have, properly enough, a legal discussion on the rights of certain claimants to the throne. In the course of this discussion the following colloquy takes place :

*Plantagenet.* Great lords and gentlemen, what means this silence?  
Dare no man answer in a case of truth?

*Suffolk.* Within the Temple-hall we were too loud;  
The garden here is more convenient.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Plan.* Thanks, gentle sir.  
Come, let us *four* to dinner.

Mr. E. J. Castle, 'a member of the Queen's Council and a life-long resident in the Temple,' comments on the foregoing passage thus :

'This reference to the Temple Gardens, not saying whether the Inner or Middle Temple is meant, curiously enough points to the writer being a member of Gray's Inn; . . . an Inner or a Middle Temple man would have given his inn its proper title.'—*Shakespeare, Bacon, Jonson, and Greene; a Study*, 65, n.

Gray's Inn Garden had not been laid out when the play of *King Henry VI.* was written.



The above is Number IX. of Mr. Reed's twenty *Coincidences*, and is fairly typical of all.

On the other hand, those who take this matter seriously enough to lift the cudgels in defence of Shakespeare have collected a goodly number of arguments, some of which we will set before our readers.

### I. *Arguments in Favour of Shakespeare.*

1. Shakespeare had a grammar-school education to begin with. The school at Stratford-on-Avon was acknowledged to be one of the best existing in his day.

2. It is fairly certain that he also had some legal training.

3. The details which we do possess of his life in London are very remarkable. His rapid rise to the position of actor-manager is in itself a proof of no ordinary ability. This Lord Penzance acknowledges when he says: 'A man does not get himself accepted as the guiding hand of a commercial enterprise like that of a theatre without some special fitness for it.'

4. Shakespeare's contemporaries were jealous of him. If he was so great an impostor as is now alleged, why did not one of them—we will not say all—show him up? Ben Jonson, for instance.

5. During that period of Shakespeare's life which is known as 'the interval,' it cannot be said with certainty that he was *not* educating himself. We are only asked if it is likely that he was.

6. There is no question as to his having written some portions of the plays.

7. It has been, for nearly 300 years, a 'fixed and venerable belief' that he was the author of the plays.

8. The plays must have been written by one who had an intimate knowledge of acting in all its intricacies—'who had walked the stage himself.'

9. It is a common thing for authors to destroy their MS. and proof-sheets as soon as their works are printed or published. This, apparently, was Shakespeare's custom.

10. Shakespeare simply heads the list of a long line of great literary men who rose above their circumstances and surroundings.

11. Mr. W. Carew Hazlitt says: 'In the collective edition of the plays men who had been personally intimate with the poet,



who had acted in these compositions when they were brought on the stage, who enjoyed the opportunity far better than we do of hearing reports and rumours about the pieces and their origin, who might even have beheld their friend with his pen in his hand, with the unfinished manuscript before him, attested his exclusive claim within their information to the work.'

12. It is well known that Shakespeare was even ostentatiously indifferent to his own fame.

## II. *Arguments against Bacon.*

1. The onus of proof rests with those who make the claim in Bacon's behalf. As yet no positive proof is forthcoming. All arguments hitherto adduced are mere matters of conjecture.

2. It is early yet to state, as some Baconians do quite vehemently, that Bacon *must* have written the plays. Dr. Dowden, in an able article contributed to the *National Review*, in defence of Shakespeare, makes this very plain.

3. Except by a few enthusiasts on the Baconian side, such as Mrs. Gallup and Ignatius Donnelly, the evidence based on the alleged discovery of the biliteral cipher is accounted a failure.

4. If the plays were written by Bacon, why was not the fact disclosed by some of his contemporaries ?

5. Granting that writing for the stage was considered disreputable, what about the sonnets ? Were they accounted disreputable ? Yet it is acknowledged that the same man wrote the plays and the sonnets.

6. Admitting that Ben Jonson omitted Shakespeare from his list of great contemporaries, is it likely that he had no theory as to the authorship of the plays ? Had he any reason for being anxious to keep Bacon's secret ?

7. We know so much about Bacon that it seems strange, to say the least of it, that he could have written the plays without the facts being discovered sooner ?

8. Bacon himself would have been thoroughly aware of the perennial greatness of the plays themselves, and 'would have been the last man in the world not to acknowledge the authorship of pieces which he would almost necessarily have known to be classics for all time.'

9. Mr. W. Carew Hazlitt says : 'Not only in Shakespeare's



lifetime were the plays and poems equally published as his, but when he was no more, and while Bacon yet survived, they similarly continued to be so, and the First Folio almost ostentatiously sets forth the authorship of Shakespeare, as the *Lear* of 1608 and the *Sonnets* of 1609 had previously done.'

10. The same writer says: 'All these appropriations were made, not by Shakespeare, but by the booksellers under the influence of common knowledge.' It is inconceivable that this could have been the case had Bacon been the author of the plays.

11. Bacon was unquestionably a great genius, and possessed of marvellous versatility, but such versatility as is claimed for him by those who credit him with the authorship of the plays would seem to be outside the range of human possibility when coupled with that displayed in his acknowledged works.

12. The keenest of critics, apart from prejudice, and with a thorough knowledge of Bacon and his class of mind, are unconvinced by the arguments which to the ordinary student may easily appear to be overwhelming.

Apart from the ultimate issue of this discussion, which, though long past its infancy, has not yet reached the stage of adolescence, the advantage to the student of studying both sides of the question is obvious. 'A father dying,' quotes Mr. Reed, 'called his sons to his bedside and told them he had buried a treasure in his vineyard for them. In due time they found it, not in gold or silver, but in the beautiful crops that reward the spade and pick.'

A new anthology has recently appeared, entitled *The Praise of Shakespeare*, which lovers of the 'Poet's King' will hail with gratitude. It is compiled by Mr. C. E. Hughes, with a preface by Mr. Sidney Lee. 'Two purposes,' says a modern critic, 'are served by this volume. In the first place the Baconian enthusiast, who smiles condescendingly on what Mr. A. P. Sinnett calls "one of the most ludicrous hallucinations that have ever been widely spread throughout the civilized world," is provided with ample evidence of Shakespeare's contemporary fame; and, in the second place, for the first time in English literature a volume is presented to the public which contains all the fine and brilliant things uttered in Shakespeare's praise



from the very period of his existence down to these less convincing days of scepticism and cryptograms.'

The idea of this work originated in the mind of Mr. Lee, who tells us in the preface that he had observed how the supporters of the Baconian claims 'persist in affirming that Shakespeare was unnoticed by his contemporaries, and that his achievements failed to win reputation in his lifetime or in the generations succeeding his death.' It therefore occurred to him that an excellent and permanent answer to these wild and groundless charges might be found in such a work as Mr. Hughes has now produced. The anthology must surely give the Baconian pause if he carefully studies it. In collecting all the most eulogistic references which have been made to Shakespeare by literary critics down to Matthew Arnold and other recent writers, special attention has been paid to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and many who are not wedded to either side of this pretty quarrel will feel that the evidence brought forward must make it harder for the Baconian to persist in believing that 'the Stratford butcher boy' became 'a third-rate London actor,' and remained to the end of his days an ignoramus 'who could not twice spell his own name correctly.' Amongst the strongest points adduced in proof of the high esteem in which the Bard of Avon was held by his contemporaries is a reference to the terms of the preface to the First Folio. Nor are those people allowed to escape who say that what reputation Shakespeare enjoyed among his contemporaries was due only to his skill in acting :

'The preface of the First Folio (1623) is enough to prove that this was not the case (says Mr. Hughes). The tone of the address "to the great variety of readers" is not that of publishers trying to awaken interest in a forgotten personage by calling attention to works that used to be popular. The language is that of affectionate friends, the references to Shakespeare those of intimate associates whose memories have not healed of the wound inflicted by his death. It was addressed to the public, not with diffidence that is born of anxiety, lest the subject of eulogy should meet with an indifferent welcome, but with the confidence that is inspired by friendship with a great man who is recognised as a great man.'

In this First Folio edition appeared the sonnet by Hugh



Holland, which shows plainly enough that Shakespeare had won ample recognition even in his own days. The sonnet is inscribed, *Upon the Lines and Life of the Famous Scenick Poet, Master William Shakespeare :*

Those hands, which you so clapp'd, go now, and wring,  
 You Britains brave ; for done are Shakespeare's days :  
 His days are done, that made the dainty Plays,  
 Which make the Globe of heav'n and earth to ring.  
 Dried is that vein, dried is the Thespian Spring,  
 Turn'd all to tears, and Phœbus clouds his rays :  
 That corpse, that coffin, now bestick those bayes,  
 Which crown'd him Poet first, then Poet's King.  
 If Tragedies might any Prologue have ;  
 All those he made, would scarce make one to this :  
 Where Fame, now that he gone is to the grave  
 (Death's public tiring-house), the Nuncius is.  
 For though his line of life went soon about,  
 The life yet of his lines shall never out.

Perhaps the most recent serious criticism of Shakespeare's work and 'qualifications' is that of Mr. Churton Collins, who, in his *Studies in Shakespeare*, throws much light upon the vexed question of the poet's classical education. In doing so he modestly disclaims any attempt to assume an original standpoint. He admits that Russell Lowell long ago suggested that Shakespeare possibly had access to the Greek dramas in Latin translations, and that other eminent and capable critics have maintained that in all probability he was a fair Latin scholar. Mr. Churton Collins scouts the idea that because the poet was not a University man he must needs have known but 'little Latin and less Greek.' While admitting that we have no proof of Shakespeare having been educated at the grammar-school of Stratford-on-Avon, he contends that one of his class would be certain to be sent there. At the period at which he would enter the school it stood high amongst its fellows. Its headmaster then was Walter Roche, an ex-Fellow of Corpus, Oxon., a college pre-eminent in point of scholarship. The curriculum of the school, Mr. Collins tells us, included Cordelius's *Colloquia* and other classical works. 'He (Shakespeare) would be thoroughly drilled in Lily's Latin Grammar, prescribed by Royal proclamation in each reign for use in every grammar-school, and in construing and parsing the sentences learnt. Of his familiarity with this part of a classical education he gives us an amusing illustration in *Love's Labour's Lost* (Act IV., Scene 2, and Act V., Scene 1).' Mr. Collins insists that Shakespeare must



have read the Latin Classics from which he borrows in the original, for the simple reason that there were no translations of them in existence at the time, maintaining that it is difficult to believe, for instance, that the poet had not read *Lucretius*, of whose works there was no translation until long after the Elizabethan age. Mr. Collins calls the Baconian theory a 'mania' and 'a monstrous tax on our credulity.'

## APPENDIX II

### THE ORTHOGRAPHY OF SHAKESPEARE'S NAME

THERE are but five extant specimens of Shakespeare's handwriting. These consist of autograph signatures to the following documents :

1. The purchase-deed of a house in Blackfriars. It is on parchment, and is dated the 10th of March, 1613. It is now in the library of the Guildhall, London.
2. A mortgage-deed relating to the same house, dated the 11th of March, 1613, the day following the purchase. This is now in the British Museum.
3. The poet's will, which was finally executed in March, 1616, about a month after his death. It consists of three sheets of paper, at the foot of each of which Shakespeare signed his name. It is now at Somerset House, London.

No other specimen of Shakespeare's writing has hitherto been discovered, but this appears less wonderful when we consider the fact that specimens of the handwriting of almost all the great authors who were his contemporaries are extremely rare. Edmund Spenser is another case in point.

The extant signatures differ slightly in the form of spelling. They are written in the old English style, and are somewhat puzzling to the unskilled reader. Scholars, however, attach but little importance to the discrepancies, which are strongly characteristic of the age. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries even authors of distinction did not always sign their



names in the same way. Sir Walter Raleigh was a notable example of this inconsistency. It cannot, therefore, be called important, but it is unquestionably interesting to consider the various forms in which the name of the greatest of all poets and dramatists has been handed down to us.

The signature in the purchase-deed is generally supposed to be 'William Shakspere,' though in all other parts of the document it is 'William Shakespeare.'

In the mortgage-deed the signature is supposed by some critics to be 'Shakspere,' while others read it 'Shakspeare.'

In the will the first signature is now so faded that it can scarcely be deciphered. Mr. George Steevens, however, made a facsimile of it in 1776, from which it appears that the writing was 'Shakspere.' The other two signatures have been variously interpreted as 'Shakspere,' 'Shakspeare,' and 'Shakespeare.'

Mr. Sidney Lee, whose valuable note on this subject should be closely studied, points out that 'Shakespeare' is the form adopted in the text of all the legal documents relating to the poet's property, and 'alone has the sanction of legal and literary usage.' Yet, in spite of all this, each of the above forms has obtained the sanction of a large number of Shakespearian scholars of every period.

The visitor to Stratford must guard against placing too much importance on the spelling in the registers, as these were written by the various officials, a fact which easily accounts for the discrepancies which are to be found there in entries relating to the poet and other members of his family.

In *Contributions to a Catalogue of the Lennox Library* there are exhaustive and valuable notes on this subject. In the course of these the author says :

'Not pausing to examine all the four thousand ways of spelling the name according to English orthography which Mr. George Wise (in *The Autograph of William Shakespeare*, Philadelphia, 1889) exhibits, nor the "thirty-seven different authentic ways of spelling it," which, he tells us, have been counted in tracing the name back through the records of the family, nor the twenty-six modes offered by the Rev. Joseph Hunter, we shall confine our attention to the four forms (omitting a few now obsolete) which appear in connection with the author's works, or with comments upon them by others.'



*I. Shakespear.*

For this form there are forty-two authorities, including Burns, Dryden, Hazlitt, Ben Jonson, and Sir William Temple. This form may be dismissed as obsolete, and not likely to be revived.

*II. Shakspere.*

Sir Frederick Madden contends that this is the way in which the poet spelled his name in each of the five autographs. This he states in opposition to Chalmers and Drake, who insist that all the signatures are dissimilar. He also states that the name is written thus in the Stratford registers, both at baptism and burial, as well as the names of other members of the family between 1558 and 1593. Sir Frederick is right as regards the birth entry, but wrong as regards the burial, which is entered as that of 'Shakspear' or 'Shakspeare,' the doubt being as to whether the 'r' is followed by an 'e' or a mere flourish.

Mr. Frederick J. Furnivall, who founded the new 'Shakspeare Society,' supports this spelling. He humorously says: 'Though it has hitherto been too much to ask people to suppose that Shakespeare knew how to spell his own name, I hope the demand may not prove too great for the imagination of the members of the new society.'

*III. Shakspeare.*

For this spelling there are 111 authorities cited, amongst them Byron, Thomas Campbell, S. T. Coleridge, De Quincy, Dibdin, Hallam, Macaulay, Isaac Reed, and Wordsworth.

*IV. Shakespeare.*

This is undoubtedly the most popular form, 282 authorities being cited in support of it. Amongst these are Addison, Collier, Denham, Dryden, Halliwell-Phillips, Heminge and Condell, Lord Jeffrey, Dr. Johnson, Prof. Dowden, Sir Walter Scott, Swinburne, Skeat, Walpole, and Wordsworth. The New York Shakespeare Society may also be mentioned in its support.

The student will notice that authors are not always consistent in this matter, and that some names appear in more than one



of the above lists. 'It is a reproach to English people that they cannot agree about the spelling of the name of their greatest author. Let the minorities yield to the large majority, and hereafter all unite in *Shakespeare*.' This is the name as spelled on the title-page of the First Folio, in the dedication of *Venus and Adonis* to Lord Southampton, and on most of the Quartos published during the poet's lifetime. It is written so on the portrait which is the original of Droeshout's famous engraving—the only portrait with any contemporary evidence of being a likeness—and it is so written upon the poet's tomb.

## APPENDIX III

### POETS' CORNER

THE name *Poets' Corner*, as applied to the south transept in Westminster Abbey, is first mentioned by Goldsmith. We are told that the attraction to the spot as a burial-place for the poets arose from its containing the tomb of Chaucer, the Father of English Poetry. The tomb itself, though it was not erected until more than 150 years after the death of the poet, is the only ancient one in the transept.

'Those who look upon the tombs of the poets,' says Mr. Hare in a little guide-book which is full of interesting details and comments, 'can scarcely fail to observe, with surprise, how very few are commemorated here whose works are now read, how many whose very existence is generally forgotten.' In fact, as Addison wrote, 'there are many poets who have no monument, and many monuments which have no poets.' The visitor will look in vain for any monument to the memory of Sir Philip Sidney, Christopher Marlowe, Sir John Suckling, Francis Quarles, Robert Herrick, Thomas Chatterton, Allan Ramsay, George Crabbe, Felicia Hemans, Keats, Scott, Shelley, or Walter Savage Landor. William Cowper and George Herbert are commemorated, it is said, by stained windows.

The following is a list of the poets commemorated in Poets'



Corner, beginning on the right from the door at the south end of the transept :

*Michael Drayton*, author of the *Polyolbion*. He died in 1631. His bust was erected here by Anne Clifford.

*John Philips*, author of *The Splendid Shilling*. The monument was erected by his friend, Sir Simon Harcourt, 1708.

*Geoffrey Chaucer*. A gray marble altar-tomb, with a canopy, erected by Nicholas Brigham, an admirer of the poet, in the reign of Edward VI. Chaucer died in 1400. The window above the tomb was erected to his memory in 1868.

*Robert Browning* was buried near Chaucer's tomb in 1889, and *Lord Tennyson* close by in 1892.

*Abraham Cowley*, 1667. The monument is over the grave of the poet, and was erected by George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham.

*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* is commemorated by a bust placed in the transept in 1884.

*John Dryden*, 1700. A monument erected by Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, with a bust by Scheemakers, given by the poet's widow in 1730.

Near Dryden's monument lies *Francis Beaumont*, 1616.

Returning to the south door, and taking course to the left, the first monument is that of *Ben Jonson*. It is an allegorical sculpture by Rysbrach, and was erected in 1737.

*Edmund Spenser*, 1599. Buried here at the expense of Devereux, Earl of Essex.

*Samuel Butler*, 1680. Buried at St. Paul's, Covent Garden. Bust erected by John Barber, Lord Mayor of London.

*John Milton*, 1674. Buried at St. Giles's, Cripplegate.

*Thomas Gray*, 1771. Buried at Stoke Pogis. Monument by John Bacon.

*William Mason*, 1797. Buried at Aston, in Yorkshire. Monument by the elder Bacon.



*Thomas Shadwell*, 1692. Buried at Chelsea. Monument by the elder Bacon.

*Matthew Prior*, 1721. Bust by Coysevox, a present from Louis XIV.

*Christopher Anstey*, 1805, author of the *New Bath Guide*.

*Thomas Campbell*, 1844. Beneath his statue, by Marshall, are to be seen some lines from his *Last Man*.

*Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 1834. Buried at Highgate. Bust by Thorneycroft, given by an American admirer in 1885.

*Robert-Southey*, Poet-Laureate, 1843, buried at Crosthwaite, A bust by Weekes.

*William Shakespeare*, 1616. The monument, by Kent and Scheemakers, was erected by public subscription in 1740. A statue holding a scroll, on which are inscribed some lines from *The Tempest*.

*James Thomson*, 1748, buried at Richmond. The monument was designed by Robert Adam, and consists of a figure leaning on a pedestal, which bears in relief the *Seasons*. It was sculptured by Kent.

*Robert Burns*, 1796. Bust by Steel. Cost defrayed by subscriptions in Scotland.

*Nicholas Rowe*, 1718. Poet-Laureate of George I. Epitaph by Pope. Monument by Rysbrack.

*John Gay*, 1732. Monument by Rysbrack, erected by the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry.

*Oliver Goldsmith*, 1774, buried at the Temple. The medallion is by Nollekens.

#### LITTLE POETS' CORNER

At the south-west corner of the Abbey, behind Cornewall's tomb, is the Baptistery, which Dean Stanley used to call 'Little Poets' Corner.' It contains a statue of Wordsworth, who was buried at Grasmere, a monument to John Keble (who was buried at Hursley), with a bust by Woolner, a bust of Matthew Arnold by Bruce Joy, and a bust of Charles Kingsley by Woolner. Arnold was buried at Laleham, and Kingsley at Eversley.



## APPENDIX IV

## THE SONNET

A SONNET is a form of verse which stands apart from all other kinds of poetical compositions. Its English name is derived from the Italian *sonetto*, a diminutive of *suono*.

This form of verse may be defined as a poem in a stanza mostly iambic in movement, properly decasyllabic or hendecasyllabic in metre, always in fourteen lines—originally composed of an octet and a sestet—properly expressing two successive phases of one thought.

The date and place of its origin cannot be stated with absolute certainty, but the best authorities are now agreed that it was born in Provence and nurtured in Italy. By many, however, it is spoken of as 'of Italian origin.' The first writer to put this kind of poetical composition into the form which has since generally obtained was Fra Guettone d' Arezzo, who flourished in the year 1250 and died in 1295. It is to Petrarch, however, that the sonnet owes its ultimate perfection. He it was who, by embellishing it with all the graces of which it was capable, and which his wonderful genius abundantly supplied, brought it so greatly into fashion that from his time to this day it has been, among the Italians, and for a long space of time among all the other nations who imitate them, the prevailing mode of lyric poetry.

The sonnet, then, though it has often varied according to the fancy of different writers, may be generally thus described :

It is a short regular ode of fourteen decasyllabic lines, consisting, as the Italians phrase them, of two quadernarii interrhymed, followed by two ternarii or terzetti, inter-rhymed also, though the arrangement of the rhymes (in the terzetti) be not always the same. The last terzetto concludes with what is termed the *chiusa*, or close, which, for the most part, and especially in Petrarch, contains in it the principal thought on which



the sonnet is built, or at least some conspicuous sentence or striking allusion.

These are the lines laid down by Lord Charlemont, the translator of the sonnets of Petrarch (Dublin, 1822).

The Italian form of sonnet has always been looked upon by experts as the only *genuine* or *pure* form. In addition to the rules stated above, it must be remembered that while the form of the octet in a pure sonnet is invariable, that of the sestet is absolutely free, save that the emotions should govern the arrangement of the verses. The octet consists of two rhymes only, which must be arranged *a, b, b, a ; a, b, b, a ;* while the sestet may consist of either two or three rhymes, with a choice as to their disposition in the verse.

Of the various forms of what we must term miscellaneous sonnets, the most usual, and perhaps the best, is that which was invented by the Earl of Surrey, and almost universally adopted by Shakespeare, consisting of three quatrains and a couplet, the quatrains rhyming alternately.

Spenser's sonnet also consists of three quatrains rhyming alternately and ending with a couplet. It differs from Shakespeare's in this respect, that the first line of each succeeding quatrain rhymes with the last line of the preceding one.

With some exceptions the sonnets of Milton are of the pure Italian or Petrarchan type. In some instances, however, he misses the aim of the Petrarchan scheme by blending the octet with the sestet.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning's sonnets are, as a rule, pure Petrarchan. She rhymes all her sestets in the same way—*a, b ; a, b ; a, b.*

A large number of Wordsworth's sonnets are pure Petrarchan, but some of his quatrains rhyme alternately.



## APPENDIX V

## POETS-LAUREATE

The title of 'Poet-Laureate' was not used in England until the fourteenth century. It was then used in two senses, differing not merely from each other, but from the sense in which it is applied at the present day. In one sense it was used to denote a particular degree at the University, whereas, on the other hand, any poet of very superior merit might be called a Poet-Laureate by his own admirers. Edmund Spenser was the first to whom the title was given in the sense in which it has been used ever since. The following is a list of those who have been thus distinguished :

Edmund Spenser	..	..	..	..	1591-1599
Samuel Daniel	..	..	..	..	1599-1619
Ben Jonson (Interregnum)	..	..	..	..	1619-1637
Sir William Davenant	..	..	..	..	1660-1668
John Dryden	..	..	..	..	1670-1689
Thomas Shadwell	..	..	..	..	1689-1692
Nahum Tate	..	..	..	..	1692-1715
Nicholas Rowe	..	..	..	..	1715-1718
Laurence Eusden, Clerk	..	..	..	..	1718-1730
Colley Cibber	..	..	..	..	1730-1757
William Whitehead	..	..	..	..	1757-1785
Thomas Warton, Clerk	..	..	..	..	1785-1790
Henry James Pye	..	..	..	..	1790-1813
Robert Southey	..	..	..	..	1813-1843
William Wordsworth	..	..	..	..	1843-1850
Alfred, Lord Tennyson	..	..	..	..	1850-1892
Alfred Austin	..	..	..	..	1896

When Ben Jonson was appointed the salary attached to the office was 100 marks. In response to a petition which that poet addressed to the King, it was raised to £100 per annum, to which was added an annual gift of a tierce of Jonson's favourite wine—Canary. This in turn was commuted during the laureate-



ship of Pyc for £27 a year, though it had been discontinued for awhile during the reign of James II. A rule was established in the time of the Georges by which the Poet-Laureate was expected to present an ode to the King every year on his birthday.

Isaac Disraeli, in his *Curiosities of Literature*, gives the following sketch of the history of 'Poets Laureat,' from a memoir of the French Academy, by the Abbé Resnel :

'The custom of crowning poets is as ancient as poetry itself ; it has, indeed, frequently varied ; it existed, however, as late as the reign of Theodosius, when it was abolished as a remain of paganism. When the barbarians overspread Europe few appeared to merit this honour, and fewer who could have read their works. It was about the time of Petrarch that poetry resumed its ancient lustre ; he was publicly honoured with the laurel crown. It was in this century (the thirteenth) that the establishment of Bachelor and Doctor was fixed in the Universities. Those who were found worthy of the honour obtained the laurel of Bachelor, or the laurel of Doctor—*Laurea Baccalaureatus*, *Laurea Doctoratus*. At their reception they not only assumed the title, but they also had a crown of laurel placed on their heads. To this ceremony the ingenious writer attributes the revival of the custom: The poets were not slow in putting in their claims to what they had most a right, and their patrons sought to encourage them by these honourable distinctions. . . . In Italy these honours did not long flourish, although Tasso dignified the laurel crown by his acceptance of it. Many got crowned who were unworthy of the distinction. The laurel was even bestowed on Querno, whose character is given in *The Dunciad* :

Not with more glee, by hands pontific crown'd,  
With scarlet hats wide-waving circled round,  
Rome in her capitol saw Querno sit,  
Thron'd on seven hills, the Antichrist of wit.

CANTO II.

'This man was made Laureat for the joke's sake ; his poetry was inspired by his cups, a kind of poet who came in with the dessert, and he recited twenty thousand verses. He was rather the arch-buffoon than the arch-poet of Leo X., though honoured with the latter title. They invented for him a new kind of laureated honour, and in the intermixture of the foliage raised to Apollo slyly inserted the vine and the cabbage-leaves, which



he clearly deserved, from his extreme dexterity in clearing the pontiff's dishes and emptying his goblets. . . . In Germany the laureat honours flourished under the reign of Maximilian I. He founded, in 1504, a Poetical College at Vienna, reserving to himself and the regent the power of bestowing the laurel. But the institution, notwithstanding this well-concerted scheme, fell into disrepute. . . . The Emperor of Germany retains the laureatship in all its splendour. The selected bard is called *Il Poeta Cesareo*. . . . The French never had a Poet Laureat, though they had Royal Poets, for none were ever solemnly crowned. The Spanish nation, always desirous of titles and honours, seem to have known that of the Laureat; but little information concerning it can be gathered from their authors. Respecting our own country little can be added to the information of Selden. John Kay, who dedicated a History of Rhodes to Edward IV., takes the title of his *humble Poet Laureat*. Gower and Chaucer were Laureats, so likewise was Skelton to Henry VIII. In the Acts of Rymer there is a charter of Henry VII. with the title of *pro Poeta Laureato*—that is, perhaps, only a Poet laureated at the University in the King's household. Our poets were never solemnly crowned as in other countries. Selden, after all his recondite researches, is satisfied with saying that some trace of this distinction is to be found in our nation. Our kings from time immemorial have placed a miserable dependent in their household appointment who was sometimes called the King's Poet and the King's Versificator. It is probable that at length the selected bard assumed the title of Poet Laureat without receiving the honours of the ceremony; or, at the most, the crown of laurel was a mere obscure custom practised at our Universities, and not attended with great public distinction. It was often placed on the skull of a pedant than wreathed on the head of a man of genius. Shadwell united the offices of Poet Laureat and Historiographer, and by a manuscript account of his public revenue it appears that for two years' salary he received £600. At his death Rymer became the Historiographer and Tate the Laureat; both offices seem equally useless, but, if united, will not prove so to the Poet Laureat.'



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